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ABSTRACT

Over the last three years, religious groups and communities around the United States have become increasingly aware of the arrival in this country of large numbers of Salvadorans and Guatemalans seeking refuge from violence and persecution but instead facing arrest and deportation as illegal aliens. This guide is an attempt to mobilize, orient, and support congregational involvement with the people and the issues. It offers the options both to respond to the immediate human needs of the refugees and to examine and respond to the larger issues provoking their flight and the denial of haven to them in the United States. The guide is divided into eight sections. The three initial sections provide overviews and background information on the refugee-producing situations and the conditions faced by the refugees, in particular in this country. The fourth section is a summary of the options for action, from the quick and simple to the more complex. Suggestions are provided for individual responses and for congregational actions. The fifth section provides the detailed "how to" guidelines for each of the suggested options. The sixth lists social and legal services available to Central American refugees arriving in the United States. The seventh part is a summary of the legal rights of Central American refugees. The final parts comprise a compendium of resource listings and information briefs. (CMG)

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Seeking Safe Haven

A Congregational Guide to Helping Central American Refugees in the United States

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Seeking Safe Haven

A Congregational Guide to Helping Central American Refugees in the United States

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Introduction

by Patrick A. Taran, Church World Service

Over the last three years, religious groups and communities around the United States have become increasingly aware of the arrival of a large number of people from El Salvador and Guatemala seeking a safe haven, temporary refuge from violence and persecution, in this country. The stories they tell and the sheer number of them arriving suggest that their plight is critical. Some have come with terror etched on their faces, a few even with bullets still in their bodies. Some arrive without family because their families have scattered and often relatives have been killed. Few bring with them any material possessions at all. In their desperate search for safety from violence, a number have died trying to enter the United States.

As they have become aware of this tragic situation, churches and people of faith across the country are reaching out to help these refugees by offering food, clothing and shelter. As part of this ministry, many congregations and refugee-support groups have found legal assistance to be one of the most pressing needs as the great majority of the Salvadorans and Guatemalans seeking haven in the United States arrive without proper documents. Rather than accept them as refugees fleeing the violence and political terror in their homelands, the U.S. government has maintained a policy of arresting and deporting them as "illegal aliens". They are labeled "economic migrants" by the Immigration and Naturalization Service acting at the recommendation of the U.S. State Department, implying that they came in search of better economic conditions rather than to escape repression.

Church groups in border areas have been shocked to learn of the treatment given many of these refugees when apprehended by U.S. authorities. Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees have been physically and psychologically abused, denied elementary legal rights, and summarily deported back to their home countries despite their fears of what may happen to them upon return. Indeed it is equally surprising to learn that the United States stands virtually alone in its policy of refusing to recognize these Central Americans as refugees. UNHCR has declared that all Salvadorans who have fled their country since early 1980 are in a "refugee-like" situation, have a valid claim to protection, and should not be returned or "repatriated." Some observers have concluded that the U.S. may be in violation of its international treaty obligations for its treatment of Salvadorans. Canada, meanwhile, is now accepting as refugees some Salvadorans and Guatemalans faced with deportation from the U.S.

The practice of denying haven to Salvadorans and Guatemalans arriving in this country coincides with official U.S. Government support for the regimes governing their homelands. To recognize these people as bonafide refugees would be at the very least a tacit recognition that their governments are unable or unwilling to guarantee the security of their citizens. Such recognition would draw increasing attention to government responsibility for widescale atrocities and civilian deaths in El Salvador and Guatemala. To recognize that refugees are fleeing in large numbers from countries whose governments the U.S. supports might call that support into question.

For many in the church, what the United States is supporting in El Salvador and Guatemala increasingly appears to be antithetical to what most U.S. citizens believe this country stands for: democracy, equality, and haven from oppression.

This contradiction strengthened the commitment of many religious persons already working to help Central American refugees in the United States. Arizona Quaker Jim Corbett, who has been instrumental in establishing church sanctuaries and an underground railroad for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees in the U.S., reflects the sentiments of a growing number of church people in this statement:

> For those of us who would be faithful in our allegiance to the Peaceable Kingdom, there's also no way to avoid recognizing that in this case collaboration with the U.S. government is a betrayal of our faith, even if it is a passive or even loudly protesting collaboration that merely shuts out the undocumented refugee who is at our door. Where oppression rules, the way of peace is necessarily insurgent. We can take our stand with the oppressed or we can take our stand with organized oppression, we can serve the Kingdom of Love or we can serve the Kingdom of Money, but we cannot do both. Maybe, as the Gospel suggests, this choice is perennial and basic, but the presence of undocumented refugees here among us makes the definitive nature of our choice particularly clear and concrete. When the government itself sponsors the torture of entire peoples and then makes it a felony to shelter those seeking refuge, law-abiding protest merely trains us to live with atrocity.

While many others do not draw the lines so dramatically, they recognize the need to respond. For people of faith in the United States this issue is a challenge demanding responses in the light of Christian responsibility. The needs are many and varied as are the options for response. Anyone and any congregation can get involved at whatever level is appropriate to their understanding and possibilities.

This guide, Seeking Haven, is an attempt to mobilize, orient and support congregational involvement with the people and the issues. It offers the options both to respond to the immediate human needs of those refugees arriving destitute and in search of haven in the U.S., and to examine and respond to larger issues provoking flight of Central American refugees and denial of haven to them in U.S.

This guide has been developed through the joint efforts of the American Friends Service Committee, Church World Service, the Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America, and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. It is designed to be used flexibly, in whole or in part, by local congregations, religious groups and individuals as a guide and support for action on behalf of Central American refugees in the U.S.

The intent of the editorial committee is to provide a resource which can be used in a variety of ways, including extracting and duplicating selected parts for specific uses. For example, the options page could be combined with the "Focus on Washington" sub-section to produce a briefing

for a local letter-writing campaign.

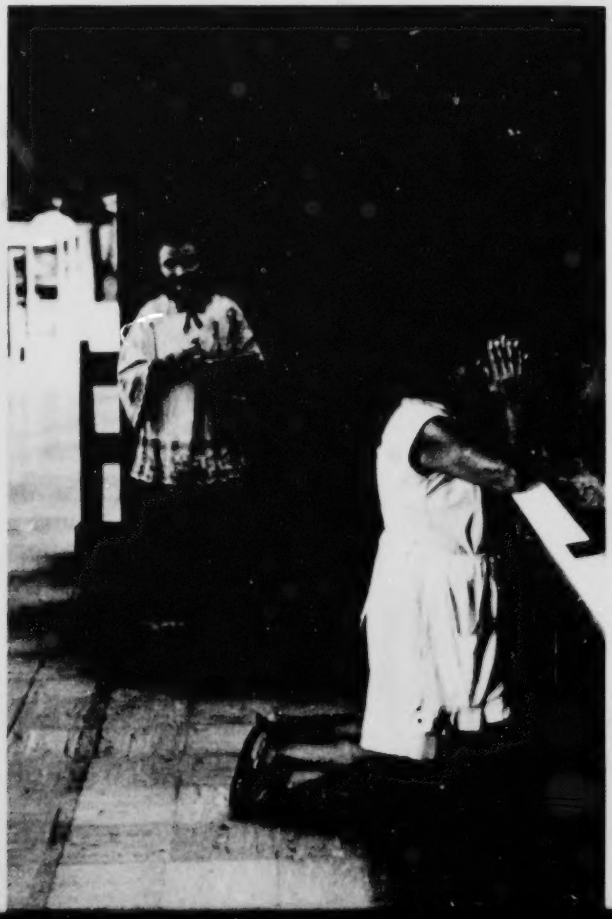
It is divided into eight sections for easy reference. The three initial sections provide overviews and background information on the refugee-producing situations and the conditions faced by the refugees, in particular in the United States. The fourth section is a summary of the options for action, from the quick and simple to the more complex. Suggestions are provided for individual responses and for congregational actions. The fifth section provides the detailed "how to" guidelines for each of the options suggested. The sixth part is a summary of the legal rights of Central American asylum-seekers. The final parts comprise a compendium of resource listings and information briefs.

A variety of options are suggested. We hope that individuals and congregations will think about the need to address larger issues and concerns, as well as the immediate needs of these refugees in our communities. Indeed, many of these needs are there only because the policies of the government that great amounts of energy and resources be spent to simply defend people from apprehension and deportation--let alone from oppression and persecution.

We hope that inspiration in these efforts will be drawn from past victories won through joint, coordinated efforts. It is especially valuable to note the announcement by Western Airlines last July to terminate its agreement with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to transport undocumented Salvadorans out of the U.S. While the airline did formally acknowledge it, the decision came as the consequence of a stockholder action and concerted national grass-roots pressure organized by religious and solidarity groups, together with a threatened boycott of the airline. Other U.S. airlines have indicated they will not take over Western's role.

Ultimately, the plight of these refugees is a call to commitment and to judgment. It is a call to stand with the poor and the oppressed. To heed this call involves risks. We hope this guide will be a useful resource for those responding to the challenge of working for Safe Haven for Central American refugees in the U.S.

The Miami Herald/David Walters



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INSIDE CENTRAL AMERICA TODAY

Central America today is a land marked by violence and suffering. Thousands of refugees such as the children above have fled fighting which has claimed thousands of lives. Centuries of injustice and oppression are being challenged by persons demanding change. U.S. Government involvement has generally proved unpopular to the U.S. public, which has feared "another Vietnam."

Left, a woman prays in San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador.

Juel Kamke

The violence is driving some refugees to seek haven in countries within Central America. However, even inside refugee camps, they are not always safe as government forces from El Salvador and Guatemala have made numerous raids into refugee camps in neighboring countries terrorizing their inhabitants.

Left, two young Salvadoran refugees in Honduras.

Below, Salvadoran refugee women celebrate their camp's first birth.

UNHCR/S.Farkas

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Refugees from El Salvador

To act on behalf of Central American refugees in the U.S., it is important for us to know as much as possible about where they come from, why they come, and how they are generally being received here. The following article provides an overview of this background information. Mary Solberg is Coordinator for Central American Concerns, a program of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.). The article is reprinted with permission from Migration Today.

El Salvador

Mary Solberg[1]

On March 28, 1982 elections were held in El Salvador. There is little question that the large turn-out of voters represented an expression on the part of many Salvadorans of their desire for something different from the violence that has claimed 30,000 lives since October of 1979.

As of this writing, however, few observers are willing to predict the future course, political or military events in that country will take as a result of the elections. Some suggest that a right-wing coalition will exclude José Napoléon Duarte, President of the junta supported by the U.S. Others say that such a coalition, headed by Major Roberto D'Aubuisson, a cashiered officer implicated in the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero in March 1980, has modified its rhetoric enough to justify continued U.S. support to the Salvadoran government that will emerge in the coming weeks.

Was a free and fair election possible, given fifty years of election fraud and political repression of those considered to be "subversive" to a long succession of military-controlled governments? Did the election results express the will of the Salvadoran people? Will the decision of the U.S. government as to whether to continue to support the Salvadoran government with military aid be based on these election results, on U.S. foreign policy objectives that may be independent of election results or on something else?

Whatever answers to these questions emerge in the coming months, it seems likely that the fighting in El Salvador will continue. With it, the flow of refugees will continue. The following discussion is intended to shed some light, to raise some questions and to plead for reasonable, humane responses to the human consequences of the Salvadoran tragedy.

...the current struggle in El Salvador has its roots in decades, even centuries of economic, social and political oppression. Characterizing what is occurring there in terms of an East-West confrontation between superpowers or their alleged agents these critics contend betrays ignorance of Salvadoran history.

The volume of news and debate about United States policy regarding El Salvador, measured both in quantity and in decibel level, has increased markedly during recent months. For its part, the Reagan administration argues that "the decisive battle for Central America is underway in El Salvador". According to this view, elaborated by Assistant Secretary of State Thomas O. Enders in February 1982, the national security interests of the U.S. are gravely threatened by the attempt of what he describes as a "violent minority" or Communist-supplied, Communist-directed guerrillas to overthrow El Salvador's U.S.-backed junta, led by José Napoléon Duarte.

Critics of this view argue that the current struggle in El Salvador has its roots in decades, even centuries, of economic, social and political oppression. Characterizing what is occurring there in terms of an East-West confrontation between superpowers or their alleged agents, these critics contend, betrays ignorance of Salvadoran history. "No outside agent has been needed to provoke the pathetic peasants to protest the misery of their lives", according to Murat Williams, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador from 1961 to 1964. "Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews, rich philanthropists, poor university students, sociologists and others appalled by injustice have decried the plight of the Salvadoran people and worked zealously to alleviate the misery. Their usual reward is to be called 'Communist'."

Even those who have not made up their minds about the origins or character of the Salvadoran conflict have called for restraint on the part of the U.S., particularly with regard to a wider U.S. military involvement. Reagan administration officials, while justifying substantial increases in military assistance to the Salvadoran junta, continue to assure the American public that there are no immediate prospects of involving U.S. combat troops in the Salvadoran conflict.

At the same time, Secretary of State Alexander Haig refuses to rule out any options and, despite the uneasiness of congress and the public about further U.S. military commitment to the Salvadoran junta, has declared that neither he nor other senior policymakers can be bound by what he terms "the lowest common denominator" of American public opinion in making foreign policy.

Mary Solberg, Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.

Among members of congress and a growing segment of the U.S. public, discussions of the future course of U.S. policy regarding El Salvador focus more and more often on haunting parallels between this instance and Vietnam. Charges and countercharges fly, ascribing responsibility for death and destruction to Salvadoran government security forces, paramilitary right-wing "death squads" beyond the control of the Salvadoran government and "left-wing terrorists" alike. Disputes over the exact number of thousands of civilian deaths in El Salvador are reminiscent of disputes over "body counts" in Southeast Asia. Yet somehow, the statistics themselves become weapons in a war of words that distracts attention from the grim daily reality experienced by the people of El Salvador.

Background

El Salvador, a country the size of the state of Massachusetts, shares borders with Guatemala on the west and Honduras on the north and east. It is at the same time one of the most densely populated and poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Less than one percent of the population of around five million owns forty percent of the land, while well over ninety percent of the population owns less than five percent of the land.

The average wage of a worker in El Salvador in 1979 was $1.95 per day; about ninety percent of Salvadorans earn less than $100 per year. Sixty percent of the population is illiterate. The country has the lowest per capita caloric intake of any country in Latin America; about three-quarters of all children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition. Of every 1,000 babies born, 100 die before they reach the age of one. There are fewer than three doctors for every 10,000 people.

Such statistics, adduced to suggest the degree of inequity in the distribution of resources that can lead to internal upheaval, are also used (most notably by officials of the U.S. State Department) to define those who have fled from El Salvador as "economic migrants" and therefore, not entitled to refugee status or political asylum in the U.S. The issue of whether "economic" factors or "political" factors contribute more to a "well founded fear of persecution" if a person is returned to the country from which he or she fled – and the issue of whether these kinds of factors can be separated, especially in the case of persons fleeing from countries in which both governmental and economic structures are repressive – must surely be joined by those who care about refugees. Although this is not the place to explore these issues, there is no question that the refugee crisis emanating from El Salvador provides a case study for a wider debate.

Economic and social inequities in El Salvador, as elsewhere, have existed in a political context. That country has been ruled by the world's longest succession of military dictatorships. In 1931, the country's last civilian president was overthrown by army officers following a series of strikes and mass marches by coffee workers demanding unemployment benefits and a minimum wage in the face of deteriorating economic conditions. General Maximiliano Hernández Martínez assumed the presidency and, in one of his first official acts, ordered the massacre of over 30,000 people during a peasant uprising in 1932.

According to José Napoléon Duarte, president of El Salvador's ruling junta, "This is a history of people starving to death, living in misery. For fifty years, the same people had all the power, all the money, all the opportunities. Those who did not have anything tried to take it away from those who had everything. But there

were no democratic systems available to them, so they have radicalized themselves, have resorted to violence. And of course, this second group, the rich, do not want to give up anything, so they are fighting."

Duarte ran for president of El Salvador in 1972 and won a clear popular majority. Before he could take office, however, he was arrested by the military, tortured, and exiled to Venezuela. In 1977, the same coalition that backed Duarte five years before ran a moderate colonel for the presidency. He, too, won, but the government party's candidate, General Carlos Humberto Romero, falsified the election results and claimed the office. Human rights violations committed under General Romero became the object of U.S. Congressional investigations and in 1979, moderate army officers, supported by the U.S. State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA, toppled General Romero.

The civilian-military junta that replaced him promised large-scale social and land reforms. Christian Democrat members of the new junta resigned three months later, in January of 1980, when negotiations to insure civilian control of the military were thwarted by the junta's defense minister, Colonel José Guillermo Garcia. In an apparent attempt to maintain credibility at home and abroad as a civilian-led government, the remaining members of the junta brought Duarte back from exile and installed him as president of the junta late in 1980.

Despite commitments to reform, human rights violations spiralled beginning in the fall of 1979. Prominent among the targets of violence during 1980 were Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, the most widely revered leader in El Salvador, who was assassinated while saying mass, and who had, only a few weeks before, called for an end to U.S. aid to El Salvador's government; six leaders of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR), the political opposition coalition; four American church women working with the rural poor; and the head of the Salvadoran land reform institute, Roberto Viera, and two U.S. land reform advisors working with him.

The prominence of these individuals warranted news coverage in many parts of the world, and certainly called attention to the tiny country of El Salvador. But the toll in lives has taken grotesque proportions among "ordinary" people. More than 10,000 Salvadorans were killed or disappeared during 1980; estimates for 1981 alone are almost twice that figure. Socorro Juridico, the Legal Aid Office of the Archbishop of San Salvador, has documented thousands of these cases.

Observers from Amnesty International and eyewitnesses from church relief agencies working with refugees within and outside of El Salvador corroborate reports that well over half of the victims of this violence have been unarmed peasants. According to Amnesty International, in a letter to Secretary of State Haig in mid-1981, "Analysis of all available data suggests that the majority of the reported (human rights) violations, including torture, 'disappearance' and deliberate cold-blooded killings, have been carried out by the security forces, and have been directed against people not involved in guerrilla activities".

A New Refugee Crisis

The violence in El Salvador that has taken so many lives outright also has spawned a refugee crisis of overwhelming proportions within El Salvador, in surrounding Central American nations and within the borders of the U.S. itself. The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates, for example, that 150,000 to 200,000 persons are displaced within El Salvador. In a July 1981 memorandum to the State Department, U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Deane Hinton reported that conditions in those few refugee camps that do operate within the country are "far inferior" to those in Southeast Asia. Homeless, sick and dispossessed Salvadorans who have sought refuge in some of these camps report that even there they are not safe from Salvadoran security forces who routinely harass the camps in search of guerrillas they claim are hiding among the refugees.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) representative in the northern Latin American region (which runs from Panama to Mexico) estimates that up to 350,000 Salvadorans have fled to surrounding countries: there are 100,000 or more in Mexico, 30,000 in Honduras, 7,000-10,000 in Belize, 100,000-180,000 in Guatemala, 20,000 in Nicaragua, 10,000 in Costa Rica and 1,500 in Panama.

Economically strapped Nicaragua has provided the warmest welcome, granting Salvadoran refugees free mobility, and work authorizations and cooperating with the UNHCR in providing emergency housing. In Honduras, on the other hand, refugees along that country's border with El Salvador have been subjected to raids by the Salvadoran armed forces, incursions that have occurred throughout the past year with the apparent concurrence and sometimes the active participation of Honduran military forces. Eyewitnesses, including church relief workers and U.S. congressional aides, have reported that only their direct, on-the-spot intervention prevented the forced removal of groups of refugees from these border camps by Salvadoran troops.

According to the UNHCR, "much of the violence in El Salvador today is politically motivated in order to instill fear and submission into the populace whose political sympathies are suspect. Persons fleeing this kind of violence are *bona fide* political refugees and not simply war-displaced persons and should under no circumstances be compelled to return. It is immaterial that they have not previously articulated any political opinion or belonged to any political organization". Groups such as *campesino* (peasant) leaders, trade unionists, opposition political leaders, human rights advocates, university professors and school teachers, students, priests, religious, and social workers and medical personnel have been singled out as most specifically vulnerable to threats and death. However, the vast majority of those who have fled are "ordinary" people – men, women, children.

Seeking Refuge in the U.S.

As many as 200,000 Salvadorans have fled to the United States during the past two years, seeking here – as in the other countries to which some of their compatriots have fled – a temporary refuge from the violence and terror wracking their country. In stark contrast to the picture painted by the U.S. government and the Salvadoran president that a moderate, centrist government has been struggling to mediate between forces of the extreme right and the extreme left, these refugees tell stories of terror, disappearance, rape, mutilation and murder at the hands of Salvadoran government forces. Few have not experienced the death of at least one family member or a close friend; few have not been threatened, either directly or because of imputed association with those the government believes to be "subversive".

The United States has had a longstanding tradition as a haven for those fleeing persecution and oppression of many kinds. Moreover, as a signatory to the United Nations Protocol on the

People who have fled violence, travelling several thousand miles by bus and on foot through inhospitable countries, paying bribes to corrupt border officials, police and coyotes to secure passage to safety who know what they are likely to face if they return to El Salvador are unlikely to want to go back. Why then are there so many "voluntary" departures?

Status of Refugees (whose principles were integrated into U.S. law through the Refugee Act of 1980), the U.S. has both national and international legal obligations in relation to refugees and asylum seekers who have fled their homelands in fear for their lives.

Principal among those obligations is adherence to the internationally recognized principle of *non-refoulement*, that is, the prohibition against forcibly returning those who have a "well-founded fear of persecution" if they are returned to the country from which they fled.

Notwithstanding tradition and obligation, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has been apprehending Salvadoran refugees and returning them to El Salvador at a rate of between 900 and 1000 per month. The INS does not recognize them as refugees, but rather as "illegals", persons who have entered the U.S. without documents. In fiscal year 1980, the INS apprehended about 12,000 Salvadorans; in fiscal year 1981, more than 15,000 were apprehended. Based on its own estimate that for every one apprehended, two to five enter undetected, the INS concedes that as many as 150,000 Salvadorans may have entered the U.S. during the past two years. Church and legal advocacy groups working on behalf of Salvadorans in the U.S. believe this is a very conservative estimate of the true number who have fled to this country.

Of those arrested and returned to El Salvador by the INS, only about a fourth have been formally deported. The remainder have accepted "voluntary departure", agreeing by signing a form to waive the right to a deportation hearing, and to be returned (usually at U.S. taxpayers' expense, since very few who have fled have the financial resources to pay the fare home) to El Salvador.

People who have fled violence, traveling several thousand miles by bus and on foot through inhospitable countries, paying bribes to corrupt border officials, police and "coyotes" (people smugglers) to secure passage to safety, who know what they are likely to face if they return to El Salvador, are unlikely to want to go back. Why then are there so many "voluntary" departures?

The answer is that "voluntary" is a relative term. Both advocates for Salvadorans detained by the INS and the refugees themselves reveal that the INS either neglects to advise those detained of their rights or violates those rights, generally for the purpose of encouraging detainees to accept voluntary departure. In many instances the Spanish-speaking and sometimes illiterate detainees are asked to sign forms printed in English only. Some are threatened with indefinite detention if they do not sign. Others are told things will go "better" for them if they do sign.

Those who enter the United States with other family members and are picked up together by the Border Patrol (the enforcement arm of the INS) are separated from one another and kept in different detention facilities. Husbands are told they will not see their wives again and mothers that they will not see their children again unless they sign. Children are told their parents have already been sent back.

By law, bonds are set at the discretion of the immigration officer in charge and need not be set at all. The bonds are uniformly excessive for Salvadorans who have committed the "crime" of entering the U.S. without documents. Bail is generally set at $5,000 or more for every detained man, woman and child. Since most have used whatever resources they had to get to this country, even the most minimal bond is difficult if not impossible to raise. Those who arrest or detain undocumented Salvadorans are unlikely to appraise them of their rights to secure legal counsel or to apply for political asylum. Under these circumstances most Salvadorans do what the INS would like them to do – sign the voluntary departure form. They are then driven to the nearest airport and flown back to El Salvador.

One clearly documented case of what happens to Salvadorans returned by the INS to El Salvador stands for many undocumented cases: In June 1981, Santana Chirino Amaya was apprehended by the INS in Washington, D.C.; shortly thereafter, he was deported to El Salvador. In August 1981 his tortured, almost-decapitated body was found just outside the capital city of San Salvador. Whether Mr. Chirino Amaya was the victim of purposeful or random violence, and at whose hands, are matters of conjecture, but there is little question that if he had not been returned to El Salvador, he would not have been brutally murdered.

The only resource currently available to Salvadorans who have been picked up by the INS is to apply for political asylum. This lengthy, complicated process requires help from interviewers, interpreters and legal personnel, who must first locate Salvadorans in detention and then inform them of their right to apply. To be given serious consideration, applicants must establish "a well-founded fear of persecution" if they are returned to their own country.

Once completed, the application is processed through the INS, which then turns to the State Department for an advisory opinion. That opinion, together with other evidence, is the basis on which the INS grants or denies the application. As of January 31, 1982, the INS had granted only 7 requests for political asylum from Salvadorans and denied 265 applications. Over 8,300 applications are pending.

In September, 1981, a UNHCR study mission investigated INS asylum processing and treatment of Salvadorans detained by the INS. Its report, entered in the *Congressional Record* for February 11, 1982, by Senator Edward Kennedy, recommended that "UNHCR should continue to express its concern to the U.S. Government that its apparent failure to grant asylum to any significant number of Salvadorans, coupled with continuing large-scale forcible and voluntary return to El Salvador would appear to represent a negation of its responsibilities assumed upon its adherence to the (U.N.) Protocol (on the Status of Refugees)".

One can make one's own judgment about who or what is responsible for the violence in El Salvador. It is a matter of public policy, however, that the U.S. government is supplying military aid to the junta. Whether one agrees with the official rationale for this policy or not, one is faced with its consequences in terms of flesh and blood.

Despite the dismal prospects for being granted asylum, thousands more Salvadorans apprehended in New York, the District of Columbia, the Rio Grande Valley, Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco and Chicago have begun the application process. If they file – and if they can be bonded out of detention – imminent deportation and the pressure to accept voluntary departure can be stayed, at least for a time.

Extended Voluntary Departure

One form of relief possible for an entire group of nationals requires the State Department to determine that the situation in their own country is so dangerous that they need not return until the situation stabilizes. Called "extended voluntary departure", this legal status has previously been granted by the INS on the advice of the State Department to nationals from Ethiopia, Lebanon, Uganda, Nicaragua and several other countries. The status is subject to review and termination at the discretion of the State Department and is granted on the understanding that when it is lifted, nationals will return to their country or be subject to deportation proceedings.

Since the beginning of 1980 Lutheran and other churches, lawyers' groups,members of Congress and a growing number of private citizens have called on the U.S. government repeatedly to grant "extended voluntary departure" to Salvadorans. Currently, Senate Resolution 336 and House Resolution 126 express the "sense of Congress" that this status could be granted. The State Department has responded that conditions in El Salvador at this time do not warrant such a step.

Interestingly, the Travel Advisory Section of the U.S. State Department, in August 1980, issued a "travel advisory", advising U.S. citizens that the State Department considers any travel through El Salvador to be extremely dangerous; recommends that no travel there be undertaken, even on official business, and cannot offer its protection to U.S. citizens traveling to El Salvador. In August 1981 the advisory was renewed, and it is expected to remain in effect indefinitely. Unfortunately for Mr. Chirino Amaya and thousands of unknown Salvadorans who have been returned to El Salvador by the INS, however, the State Department has refused to date to advise the INS to stop returning Salvadorans to a country in which the U.S. cannot offer protection to even its own citizens.

Thirty thousand people have been killed in El Salvador during the past two and a half years. In a country of just under five million, this is a staggering number. In a country the size of the United States, it would be proportionate to over one million people. Almost one-fifth of the population of El Salvador has become refugees: displaced within their own country, or seeking refuge in other Central American countries, or fleeing to the United States.

What induces a person to flee? More to the point, what induces hundreds of thousands of people to flee? Whoever or whatever is responsible for generating the violence, it is the violence that is inducing Salvadorans to flee: random terror, murder, mutilation, rape, brutality, suspicion, kidnapping and all the conditions this violence exacerbates – hunger, destruction of homes, injury and disease, lack of work and so on.

One can make one's own judgment about who or what is responsible for the violence in El Salvador. It is a matter of public policy, however, that the U.S. government is supplying military aid to the junta. Whether one agrees with the official rationale for this policy or not, one is faced with its consequences in terms of flesh and blood.

The "consequences" are bodies, many of them dead, more of them alive – and in flight. Those who have fled to the United States have done so for reasons that make life-and-death sense to them. Whether one agrees that these reasons have merit or not, one can hardly argue with the fact that many Salvadorans are in this country because they are desperately afraid to remain in their own.

The INS enforces U.S immigration laws, and when these laws are broken they arrest as many lawbreakers as they can. That is their mandate. The State Department has a powerful impact on the interpretation and operation of U.S. policy with regard to asylum-seekers from other countries. That is their mandate. One can agree or disagree with the activities or policies of either agency, but one cannot deny that such activities and policies are having daily consequences in the lives of real people who say they are fleeing violence. Questions of the law and of mandates to carry out policy must sometimes be distinguished from questions of justice.

It would be naive to believe that all individual actions by, say, the INS in relation to Salvadorans are matters of policy, thoughtful choices made by reflective people. But for every decision that is made about a Salvadoran – to set bail, to "offer" voluntary departure, to deport – there is another decision that could have been made, and has been made, at other times and with other people. For every Salvadoran asylum application that is denied, there has been another option, an option used at other times, with other people. "Extended voluntary departure" status has been granted to other nationals, and military aid to other governments has been suspended on previous occasions.

Over and over again, the question must be asked: "Why is this being done, and not that?".

The number of Salvadorans who are being arrested by the INS is, in absolute terms, small. The number who are detained for extended periods of time is a proportion of those who are arrested The number who suffer due process violations is also some fraction of those arrested. These numbers are comprehensible.

But the consequences are tragic. Whether one sees the problem in terms of individual refugees facing deportation from U.S. soil back to violence, or in terms of a larger context that includes matters of policy, there is an emergency, and it must be faced.

2

Guatemalan Refugees

This brief overview of the situation in Guatemala highlights testimonies by Guatemalan refugees in Mexico describing the atrocities from which they fled.

This article was written by Angela Berryman. She worked for eight years in Guatemala and is currently Associate Coordinator of the Human Rights Program of the American Friends Service Committee in Philadelphia.

GUATEMALA: A PEOPLE BESIEGED

by Angela Berryman
Associate Coordinator
Human Rights Program, American Friends Service Committee

Although the level of violence inside Guatemala is as high as in El Salvador (or possibly higher) and the number of people who have been forced to leave their homes is comparable, the American public has until now been much less aware of what is happening in Guatemala.

Background

The two countries are similar in some respects. Guatemala, like El Salvador, has an agro-export economy. Its principal crops produced for export are coffee, sugar, cotton, bananas and beef. A small elite, about two percent of the population, holds over 64 percent of the cultivable land. The vast majority has little or no land and has had to survive by doing seasonal labor on the plantations. As in El Salvador, the interests of the Guatemalan land-owning oligarchy have been defended by the military. In recent years, however, military officers themselves have acquired land and have gained fortunes through graft.

There are also important differences between El Salvador and Guatemala. First, over half of the population of Guatemala is made up of Indians, descendants of the Mayas, who speak a number of languages and wear distinctive clothing. They have always been the most oppressed: they are the migratory labor forces for the plantation harvest and today they are bearing the brunt of the army's repression.

Secondly, vast mineral and petroleum deposits have been developed in the last decade. Petroleum reserves are conservatively estimated at 35 million barrels; current production is approximately 10,000 barrels daily. Large deposits of nickel, lead and antimony ores have begun to be mined, primarily by North American corporations.

Third, Guatemala's political history is different. In 1944 a dictator was overthrown. Ten years of democratic politics began with legally elected governments that initiated reforms. However, when the government of Jacobo Arbenz decreed a land reform in 1952 and applied it to United Fruit, the largest landholder in the country, the United States moved against it. In 1954 a CIA-engineered coup overthrew the Arbenz government. Repression soon followed. Some 200 union leaders were killed and the land reform was stopped. Since that time the army has been the real power in Guatemala, despite periodic elections which have been tightly controlled and usually fraudulent.

During the 1960's a guerrilla movement in the mountains had some success, though it never had more than about 300 combatants. In the late 1960's, government forces killed an estimated 6,000 to 8,000 people in an effort to destroy this movement. Even when the guerrilla movement was stopped, the repression continued in the early 1970's under President Arana. Amnesty International estimated that some 20,000 people were killed during the 1966-1976 period, many by paramilitary death squads.

A new cycle of popular resistance began in the mid-1970's, especially after the February 1976 earthquake. In contrast to El Salvador, where the main thrust came from the peasant popular organizations, in Guatemala the urban labor unions led the way, with a number of strikes and important demonstrations. In part this may have been because in many of the Indian areas the people were most involved in repairing the earthquake damage.

At around the same time the army began a systematic attack on Indian peasants in the area of Ixcan, a region of newly-developed oil fields. A small guerrilla group had appeared in this region, and army officers were grabbing land for themselves. The army focused on local cooperative and church leaders. Gradually the repression spread up into the highlands of Quiche'. The overall effect of this repression, however, was to drive more people into supporting the guerrillas out of both anger and self-defense. In a real sense the brutality of the Guatemalan army recruited for the guerrillas.

Amnesty International estimated that some 20,000 people were killed during the 1966-1976 period, many by para-military death squads.

In other parts of the country the level of repression steadily increased, particularly after mid-1978 when General Romeo Lucas Garcia became president. No sector of society was immune: peasants, labor leaders, student leaders, journalists, politicians, priests – all were kidnapped, tortured and killed. In January and March, 1979, two very popular moderate politicians, one a deputy in congress and the other a former mayor of Guatemala City, were gunned down at mid-day by hit squads directed by the army. Such assassinations became routine. Amnesty International estimates that some 5,000 people were killed by the Lucas government. The government never admit-

ted to holding a single political prisoner or planning a single political execution.

In the meantime, the opposition groups were growing. One notable example was CUC (Committee for Peasant Unity), which brought together existing peasant organizations and extended peasant organizing to other areas. It led a strike of agricultural workers in February 1980 – the largest strike in Guatemalan history – and succeeded in getting the minimum daily wage raised from $1.12 to $3.20 a day (although in practice it has not always been paid). All the opposition organizations joined in forming the Democratic Front against Repression in 1979 which, although it was only a partial step, showed the growing strength of the opposition.

The brutality of the Lucas regime isolated it internationally. Guatemala had rejected military aid in early 1977 rather than subject itself to human rights scrutiny. The Carter Administration kept a cool and formal relationship with the regime. The Reagan team showed its concern about Guatemala long before taking office.

The brutality of the Lucas regime isolated it internationally. Guatemala had rejected military aid in early 1977 rather than subject itself to human rights scrutiny. The Carter Administration kept a cool and formal relationship with the regime. The Reagan team showed its concern about Guatemala long before taking office. However, when Reagan Administration officials attempted to convince the Lucas regime it should make concessions to "image," such as allowing a civilian to win the March 1982 elections, they were rebuffed. Defense Minister Anibal Guevara "won" the election (through fraud, it was charged). Shortly thereafter a coup deposed Lucas and a new government took power, headed by General Efraim Rios Montt who, as a Christian Democrat candidate had been deprived of the 1974 election.

Much has been made of Rios Montt as a "born-again" Christian and of the fact that some of the most visible manifestations of violence stopped after the coup. In response, it should be pointed out that the same army still rules Guatemala. Furthermore, it has been made abundantly clear that no one will be brought to justice for the previous repression; there will be no inquiry into who bears responsibility for the deaths of the some 5,000 people killed under President Lucas.

Most important has been what the army has *done* since the March 23 coup. In simplest terms, it appears that they have decided to concentrate the "anti-insurgency" strategy on the rural areas where the guerrillas are strongest – the departments of Quiche', Huehuetenango, Chimaltenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango and Alta Verapaz. Under the provisions of the declared state of siege, the army can legally execute people. It has also ordered all former soldiers to register for call up. Using "civilian militias," it is forcing people to go out and kill others as suspects. At the same time it forces people to take sides whether they want to or not.

There are many reports of atrocities since the Rios Montt coup in March of 1982. Villages are attacked, homes and crops are burned, women are raped, villages are bombed from the air, people are lined up in groups and shot. Amnesty International compiled a partial listing of incidents up to the end of June and arrived at a total of 2,186 people killed. There are reports from Huehuetenango that the army has poisoned water supplies and reports from Quiche' that bacteriological warfare is being used, causing diarrhea, vomiting and fainting.

The overall strategy of the army seems to be to deprive the guerrilla groups of their base of support by destroying the food supply of the civilian population, killing large numbers of people, uprooting the Indians from their areas and, if necessary, destroying the social fabric of Indian society. A top aide to Rios Montt (and a member of his church), Francisco Bianchi, said: "The problem of war is not just a question of who is shooting. For each one who is shooting there are ten working behind him. The guerrillas won over many Indian collaborators. Therefore, the Indians were subversives. And how do you fight subversion? Clearly you had to kill Indians because they were collaborating with subversion. And then it would be said that you were killing innocent people. But they weren't innocent; they had sold out to subversion."

Or, as a solider put it, "There are so many of them. Very few are armed. But we have to kill them."

The Situation Inside Guatemala

"First they came in helicopters and gathered the people together. Then, one by one they took them away and killed them. As for my own family, they killed seven. And after they killed the people, they chopped them up and picked at them with machetes. In some cases they first tortured them, cut them up with machetes, put gasoline on them and then burned them alive.

"And as for killing the children, they don't use firearms. They carry guns, but they don't use them on children. They kill them with their hands. They use their machetes sometimes. What my uncle saw when he saw them kill my seven relatives: he saw them grab the children by their feet and smash their heads against a post, or take a rope, tie it around the child and three pull it in one direction, three in another....This is how they kill the people. For this reason we came here. They poured gasoline over the bodies and burned them."

The Guatemalan Episcopal Conference estimated in March, 1982 that as many as one million Guatemalans were refugees, uprooted from their homes by violence, and that 200,000 have left the country. Others within Guatemala make similar estmates. Such figures indicate that in proportion to Guatemala's population, there are as many Guatemalan refugees as there are El Salvadoran refugees.

The Guatemalan army has in some areas sought to establish "strategic hamlets" by bringing people from one area to a central area and declaring the surrounding area to be a war zone. Those who refuse to come to the designated area thereby identify themselves as part of the enemy. The military policy being pursued is creating refugees.

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1982 that as many as one million Guatemalans were refugees, uprooted from their homes by violence, and that 200,000 have left the country. Others within Guatemala make similar estimates. Such figures indicate that in proportion to Guatemala's population, there are as many Guatemalan refugees as there are El Salvadoran refugees.

Unlike El Salvador, however, no agency can do open refugee aid work in Guatemala. No organization, including the Church, would dare to organize a refugee camp inside the country since to do so would be to mark the refugees as clearly in opposition to the government and make them a target.

Under very difficult conditions some people within Guatemala are channeling humanitarian aid to dispersed refugees and to the grass roots organizations assisting them.

The Situation Outside Guatemala

Mexico

Since many Guatemalans have always gone to southern Mexico for seasonal agricultural work, the beginning of a refugee flow were not clear at first. There were large migrations in mid-1981. In one case, some 2,000 people crossed the Usumacinta River, fleeing the Guatemalan army. At first the Mexican government wanted to avoid a refugee flow, so it deported some of these initial refugees in groups. The international outcry was so great, however, that the Mexican government was forced to face providing the refugees with protection rather than deporting them.

In mid-1982 there were an estimated 35,000 Guatemalan refugees living near the border areas and as many as 70,000 deeper in Mexico (*New York Times*, August 18, 1982). It has been the Mexican government's policy not to form large refugee camps but to have the people gathered in smaller concentrations in villages. Many refugees live with Mexican peasants who share with them what little they have. While the government has provided some help, most day-to-day work with the refugees is done by Catholic church workers in the area. Some refugees are living in only the barest of shelters (plastic sheets). Illness and malnutrition, especially among children, are continuing problems.

Some refugees are living in only the barest of shelters (plastic sheets). Illness and malnutrition, especially among children, are continuing problems.

Honduras

Most of the Guatemalan refugees in Honduras are from the southeastern departments of Guatemala. The Honduran military insists that the Guatemalan refugees who are living in Honduran towns must go to live in the refugee camp. This refugee camp, El Tesoro, located in the department of Copan, has an estimated six hundred refugees. The relief workers in the camp have been threatened by Guatemalan military patrols inside Honduras and also by the Honduran military. The refugees themselves feel very insecure in the camp.

The United States

There is no accurate way to measure the number of Guatemalan refugees in the United States. The number is clearly far smaller than that of Salvadoran refugees, partly because there is a far smaller Guatemalan community to act as a magnet. The largest concentrations seem to be in California, Texas, Chicago and New York.

Treatment of Guatemalans by immigration officials is similar to that of Salvadorans: harassment, detention and deportation.

United States Policy

Guatemalan refugees in the United States should be viewed in connection with U.S. policy in Central America. In the case of Salvadorans the policy connection is clearer: the U.S. is heavily committed to defeating the left, and therefore to supporting the Salvadoran military and government. Recognizing the refugee problem amounts to recognizing the violence and repression of the government. Not recognizing Salvadorans as political refugees is consistent with the State Department's interpretation of the Salvadoran conflict.

Like the Salvadorans, the Guatemalan refugees are the victims of a policy of war. While their most immediate needs are security from deportation, shelter, food and some way to make a living, at a more basic level the only solution to their plight can come from an end to the violence which has made them refugees. Although U.S. military aid to the Guatemalan regime is still minimal, U.S. policy in the region seems to favor a military approach to what are essentially political problems.

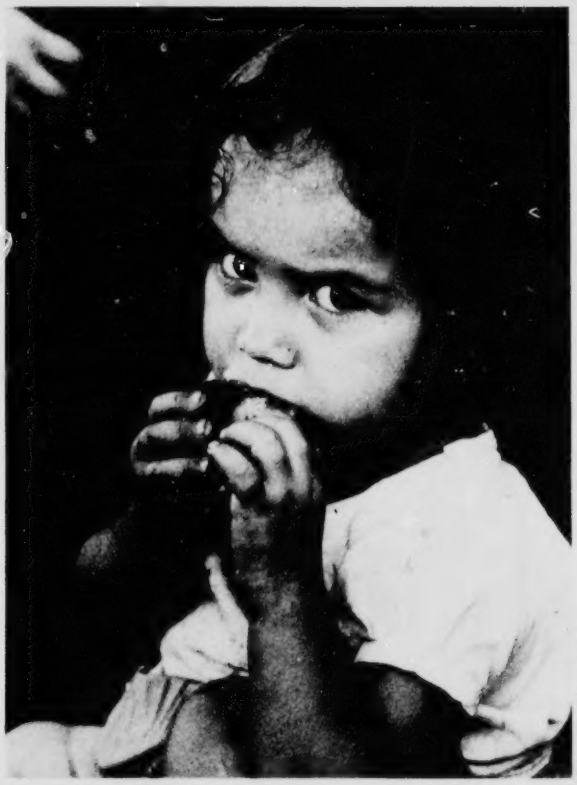
The case of Guatemala is similar, but a distinction should be made: the Reagan Administration ultimately regards Guatemala as more important than El Salvador. General Wallace Nutting, commander of the U.S. Southern Command in Panama, said in August 1982 that the U.S. should take on a role in Guatemala similar to the one it has taken in El Salvador. However, there has been strong resistance from the U.S. public and Congress because of Guatemala's well-known reputation for repression, a reputation that not even Rios Montt's image as a born-again Christian and the effort to reduce urban violence has been able to erase. Hence, while the underlying policy is the same — the defeat of the opposition groups in Central America — its application in the case of Guatemalan refugees is slightly less well defined than it is with regard to Salvadorans.

Conclusion

Like the Salvadorans, the Guatemalan refugees are the victims of a policy of war. While their most immediate needs are security from deportation, shelter, food and some way to make a living, at a more basic level the only solution to their plight can come from an end to the violence which has made them refugees. Although U.S. military aid to the Guatemalan regime is still minimal, U.S. policy in the region seems to favor a military approach to what are essentially political problems. Hence, humanitarian concern for the refugees should be joined to the pursuit of a solution to the underlying conflict.

REFUGEE CHILDREN

The suffering of refugees seems to show most poignantly on the faces of children.
These Salvadoran refugee children mirror the uncertainty, confusion, and fear that is the daily lot of refugees in Central America, where violation of refugee camps by government troops has been common.



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Phil Pulaski/Maryknoll

UMHCR/M. Vanappelghem

While the suffering of refugees is evident
on the faces of children,
so is the hope.
In the midst of the deepest despair,
refugee children such as these young
Guatemalans in Mexico reflect
the belief that not all reason
for hope is gone.

UMHCR/M. Vanappelghem

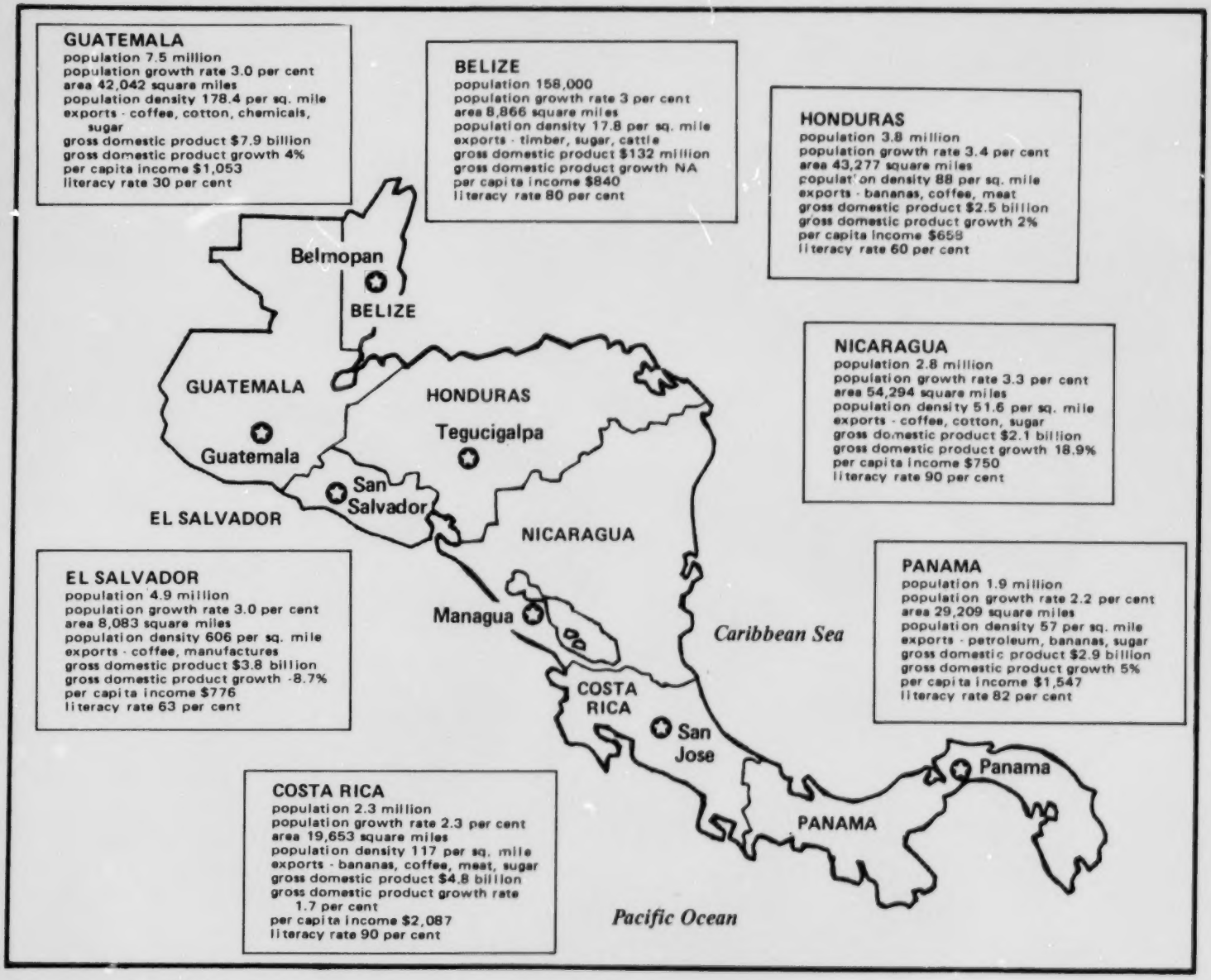
3

The Crisis at a Glance

Central America facts and figures map and "numbers at a glance" tables listing:

A) the number of Salvadoran and other Central American refugees in the various countries of the region according to the most recent figures from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

B) numbers of Salvadoran refugees in the United States, including U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) figures on apprehensions, deportations, and granting of political asylum status.



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Number of refugees as of 1 August 1982 in Central America,Panama and Mexico

Countries	Salvadorean Refugees		Other Refugees		Total	
	Assisted	Total	Assisted	Total	Assisted	Total
Belize	2,000	2,000	-	-	2,000	2,000
Costa Rica	8,000	10,000	1,500	5,000.g	9,500	15,000
Cuba	-	-	-	2,000	-	2,000
Dominican Rep.	-	-	300	5,000	300	5,000
Guatemala	-	50,000/100,000	-	-	-	50,000/100,000
Honduras	14,835.a	17,000	10,545.d	12,000.h	25,380	29,000
Mexico	3,500	120,000	12,245.e	20,000	15,745	140,000
Nicaragua	5,326.b	22,000	50	500	5,376	22,500
Panama	1,000.c	1,000	200.f	500	1,200	1,500
Total	34,661	222,000/272,000	24,840	45,000	59,501	267,000/317,000

a/ Of whom 5,872 in Colomoncagua area (i.e. Colomoncagua camp and San Antonio) - 8,963 in Mesa Grande.
b/ Of whom 1,005 are sheltered in transit centres or camps in Leon (470), Esteli (150), Chinandega (235), El Crucero (90) and Managua (60). The rest of caseload (i.e. 4,331) is living on individual basis (there is nearly 3,000 in Managua's area).
c/ 700 in Panama City - 300 in rural settlement near Belén.
d/ 8,618 Nicaraguan Miskitos in Mocoron camp - 1,430 Nicaraguan Miskitos outside camp - 497 Guatemalans.
e/ Of whom 11,245 Guatemalans.
f/ Of whom 46 Polish.
g/ 300 Guatemalans - 2,700 Cubans - 2,000 Nicaraguans.
h/ 11,000 Nicaraguan Miskitos - 1,000 Guatemalans.

* Estimates relating to the total number of refugees in a country are provided by Governments and do not imply recognition or non-recognition of any group by the High Commissioner under his mandate.

Source: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

October 1982

Fact Sheet

Reasonable estimate of the number of Salvadorans who have entered the U.S. since the end of 1979: 200,000 to 250,000

This estimate is based on statistics provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) for the number of Salvadoran nationals apprehended during Fiscal Years 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1982 to date. The INS estimates that for every undocumented entrant it apprehends, 4 or 5 enter the U.S. undetected.

Areas of major impact:

Los Angeles area	240,000
San Francisco area	80,000
New York area (including Long Island and New Jersey)	45-70,000
Washington, DC area	35,000+
New Orleans area	30-40,000
Texas (including Rio Grande Valley, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, El Paso)	60,000+
Chicago area	15,000
Seattle and Washington State	2,000
Arizona (especially Phoenix and Tucson areas)	5,000

*Los Angeles, CA, is said to be the second largest Salvadoran city in the world, after San Salvador, the capitol of El Salvador. The Salvadoran population there has burgeoned since the escalation of the civil war in El Salvador, rising from about 80,000 in 1979 to well over 200,000 now.
*Few observers are willing to be quoted even on estimates of what are essentially undocumented populations in these communities. The estimates listed here are "best guesses" made by independent and reliable sources acquainted with each area.
*Estimates for Texas and Arizona are especially difficult to make. Large numbers of Central Americans are apprehended on the U.S.-Mexican border in these states. Many Salvadorans enter the U.S. in these states, but do not remain, preferring to make their way to a larger metropolitan area. During the last year, however, the Central American population of several major Texas cities has increased dramatically. Houston, for example, is estimated by some to have as many as 50,000 undocumented Salvadoran residents, most of whom have arrived since the civil war in El Salvador began to escalate.

Immigration and Naturalization Service figures on Salvadorans:

	FY 78	FY 79	FY 80	FY 81	FY 82
Apprehended	8,968	18,834	11,762	15,940	14,078
Deported or accepted voluntary departure	3,423	3,465	8,868	10,473	1,164*
Asylum applications made				n.a.	9,671
Asylum granted				2	65
Asylum denied				154	978

Please note: Until May, 1981, asylum applications from Salvadorans were not separated out from asylum applications from all "other-than-Mexicans."

n.a.= not available

* This figure is for the first quarter of FY 82 only (Oct-Dec 81)

Source: Statistics office
U.S. Immigration and
Naturalization Service
January 1983

© Chicago Tribune

PROTEST FROM THE CHURCHES

The continued refusal of the U.S. government to grant temporary asylum to refugees from Central America along with continued return of the refugees has brought strong protests from the church community.

Above: Some churches, such as the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ in Chicago, proclaimed their churches as public sanctuary to Salvadoran refugees, who wore masks in this picture to protect their anonymity. The church took this stand because they believe the government stand to be immoral and illegal.

Right: Others, such as these church women in Los Angeles, publicly protested the deportation of Salvadorans back to their homeland.

Los Angeles Times/Jose Galvez

© Marc PoKempner

Above: U.S. immigration officials are locking up Salvadoran refugees for no "crime" other than their search for safety. Government officials are unwilling to recognize them as valid refugees.
Below: Action by church groups such as the Manzo Area Council and the Tuscon Ecumenical Council raised money for bail to release refugees.

Los Angeles Times/Jose Galvez

4

Options for Action

Summary of suggestions of what individuals and groups can do to assist Central American refugees in the U.S. and to respond to the issues of their treatment and the conditions making them refugees.

Section 5 "Guidelines for Actions" provides more detailed descriptions for engaging in suggested options.

Options for Action—What an *individual* can do to assist Central American refugees in the U.S.

A. On The Issues

1. Study the Issues

Read up on what's going on and what the issues are so that you can become informed. Use the bibliography and resource listings attached to help you find out more about the plight of Central American refugees in the U.S. and conditions in their homelands. Contact your local inter-faith committee on Central America for more information.

2. Write Congress

Write a letter or, better yet, more than one to your Congressional representatives and key Congressional leaders in Washington. Experience has shown that letters do make a difference - Congresspeople are influenced by what they hear from their constituency. The "Focus on Washington" section following provides concrete guidelines on what and whom to write. Visits to the local offices of your Congressional delegation can also be very effective.

3. Write the Editor

Communicate your concerns about local news media coverage on Central America and the refugee situations. Write letters to local newspaper, radio and television editors and visit their offices to let them know that you want more - and better - coverage.

4. Try a Housemeeting

Invite a few friends or colleagues to your house for an informal sharing of information and perspectives on the issues. Try to interest them in joining you in a group response or in hosting their own "house meeting".

5. Address Your Group

If you belong to a church, trade union, professional association, activist organization, social club or any such group, raise the issue at a meeting with the suggestion that the group make a statement or resolution and consider other options for involvement.

B. For and With the refugees

1. Contribute

Donate food, clothing, furnishings, housewares or funds to a local Central American refugee service project - if there is one in your area - or to the local ecumenical council of churches or Central American concerns group in your area.

2. Volunteer

Offer your own time and skills to work with refugees through a local service project. Whatever skills you may have will be needed - whether you're a lawyer who can help with legal work or you're able to just help a recently arrived refugee "learn the ropes" of your community.

3. Encourage Friends

Suggest to friends that they join you in contributing items and/or offering time.

4. Offer Bond

If you have the resources, consider offering to help put up funds or collateral to bond a refugee out of detention through a local Central American refugee service project. See the guidelines on "Releasing refugees from detention."

Options for Action—What a *congregation or group* can do to assist Central American refugees in the U.S.

A. On The Issues

1. Offer a Mission Minute

Offer a "mission minute" or a special prayer for Central American refugees during services.

2. Bulletin Insert

Include a bulletin insert or a brief article in your congregational or group publications or mailings to alert members to the situation and issues.

3. Organize a Program

Offer an audio-visual presentation (film or slide show) together with a knowledgeable resource person. The Sunday education hour, a monthly meeting, or a special evening program are all excellent forums to introduce and initiate discussion on the issues. It is also often very helpful to publicize such events in other churches and among the wider community.

4. Invite Central American Refugees

Invite refugees to visit and speak with the group or congregation. A program including Central American music and food can be a dynamic way of stimulating interest and raising awareness.

5. Take a Stand

Propose a resolution of concern or position for your congregation or group. This is often an effective means to encourage the membership and leadership to grapple with the issues. Other churches and judicatory bodies can be approached to join or to endorse resolutions. (See sample resolution page 43)

6. Write Congress

Organize a letter writing campaign among members of your church or organization.

Setting up a table with paper, sample statements, envelopes and stamps at the church or meeting place can facilitate getting letters written and posted.

7. Organize Delegations

Organize visits to the local office of your Congresspersons by representatives of your church and other concerned community groups. Such "face to face" encounters can be very effective in encouraging your elected representatives to take a position.

8. Contact Local Media

Communicate concerns about local newspaper, radio and TV coverage of Central America and its refugees.

9. Offer Sanctuary

Sanctuary is in essence a public welcoming of undocumented Central American refugees into the protection and care of the church. Sanctuary is a public witness of compassion, hospitality and faith to dramatize the injustices of current government policies and the just claim of refugees for protection from persecution. It is an extraordinary gesture on the part of the church as an act of civil disobedience, responding to the call of God to obey higher authority in the expression of faith and love of human beings.

B. For And With The Refugees

1. Collect Items

Collect food, clothing, furnishings, housewares and funds for Central American refugees. These can be channeled to the ecumenical service project in your area.

2. Encourage Volunteers

Encourage members to volunteer time and service to aid Central American refugees. In most areas "pro-bono" (volunteer) legal assistance, English tutoring, help in finding employment and friendship are urgently needed.

3. Organize a Project

If there are Central American refugees in your area but there is no organized service project, contact the local church council, other churches and Central American concern groups to begin such an effort. See section 7, "Local Direct Service Projects."

4. Offer Bond

Provide funds or collateral to bond refugees out of detention. Some refugees being detained have relatives here who can help them with their basic needs but don't have the resources to guarantee bonds of $2,000-3,000. Others need to be released and then to have orientation and support.

5. Aid a Refugee Family

Consider "sponsoring" a family, giving a helping hand to get people started on their own. Sponsorship is essentially the commitment to provide for the basic initial human needs of a Central American refugee or refugee family and to assist the refugees in achieving self-sufficiency. In addition to meeting material needs, sponsorship usually involves offering friendship and the crucial emotional support and guidance needed by refugees in facing losses and adjustments.

NATIONAL CAPITAL UNION PRESBYTERY

Resolution Adopted September 21, 1982

AID TO SALVADORANS AND OTHER CENTRAL AMERICANS SEEKING SAFE HAVEN IN THE UNITED STATES

Preamble

During the years of fighting and violence in El Salvador, thousands of innocent people have been killed and tens of thousands wounded and made homeless. It is reliably estimated that in the last thirty months 34,000 people have been killed. As a result, many thousands have fled the country to find safety, and for many of these the United States is the country of first asylum. As they arrive here, the Immigration and Naturalization Service aggressively rounds them up and sends them back. Some of those returned are reported to have been killed and many have suffered recrimination.

The United States Government has refused to grant people fleeing here from El Salvador the legal status of "refugee" or the privilege of "extended voluntary departure," which would enable them to remain in the United States until it is safe for them to return home. Many have been denied their rights under American law to legal counsel and to a fair explanation of their rights under the law. Instead, they have been pressured to return immediately to El Salvador.

As undocumented aliens in the United States, they are not entitled to assistance from government programs and often are afraid to leave their places of hiding to take jobs or to seek help for their basic needs.

As citizens of a free country, we have a long tradition of welcoming and providing a safe haven for people from other lands who are fleeing from the threat of death and oppression.

As Christians, we have an even longer tradition of providing sanctuary in our churches for persons escaping persecution and death. Using a church as a refuge is a recognition of the moral limits of civil government and of God's superior claim on human allegiance. In both Old and New Testaments, we are called upon to show compassion for those suffering from oppression.

Under these circumstances, The National Capital Union Presbytery:

Believes that we are called as Christians to provide a safe haven for the people who flee to the United States to escape the threat of death or severe repression in El Salvador and other Central American countries where similar conditions prevail;

Encourages the churches of this Presbytery and their members to assist Central Americans who flee here in all appropriate ways possible, including the provision of shelter, food, jobs, social services, and legal aid;

Supports the action of churches and individuals, both here and across the country, who provide sanctuary to fleeing Central Americans as a way of showing Christian compassion for them and stressing the need for change in our government's actions;

Opposes the actions of the United States Government to pressure Central Americans to leave the United States without delay when they are seeking refuge here;

Calls upon the United States Government to grant Salvadorans and other Central Americans seeking refuge the privilege of "extended voluntary departure" until they can return home with a reasonable degreee of safety, or other arrangements can be made.

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Michael Mauney/PEOPLE Weekly © 1982 Time Inc.

JOURNEY TO FREEDOM

Refugees travelling to freedom in America usually journey by an "underground" railroad which keeps them from immigration officials who would possibly deport them back to their homeland if they are apprehended. On August 9, 1982, a *People* magazine article followed the journey of one family – the Gonzalezes – on their exodus to the United States. Three photos from that article are reprinted here with permission.

Above, and left, the family's faces reflect the anxiety of their difficult journey north.

Michael Mauney/PEOPLE Weekly © 1982 Time Inc.

Above: The Gonzalez family arriving safely at the end of their journey outside the Southside Presbyterian Church in Tucson, Arizona. Accompanying them are Jim Corbett of the Tucson Ecumenical Council (right) and Carolyn Campbell (back, left) who aided them on their journey.

Below: Other refugees from Central America are not so fortunate. An ecumenical service was held in October, 1982, in Los Angeles in memory of five Salvadorans who died in Texas on their journey to freedom. Right, Sister Patricia Krommer, director of the Archbishop Oscar Romero Relief Fund, comforts Silvia Pleytez, wife of Mario David Pleytez, one of the five.

Santana Chirino Amaya Central American Refugee Committee/Joaquin Romero

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Guidelines for Action

The descriptive "how to" guidelines for carrying out the various "Options for Action". These include:

A. Focus on Washington
B. Media Work and Public Education
C. Organizing a Housemeeting
D. Sanctuary for Central American Refugees
E. Sponsorship
F. Releasing Refugees from Detention

NOTE: We have included an examination of "Sanctuary" in this booklet because of the involvement of many churches in this issue. This inclusion should not be interpreted as official endorsement by the organizations publishing this booklet.

Focus on Washington

Most of the decisions affecting the status of Central American refugees in the United States are made in Washington D.C. by the U.S. government. Such decisions, in particular those at the executive level, often seem to be made with little regard for public input or concerns. However, some of the decisions shaping current policy have been strongly and publicly challenged by the U.S. Congress, and limitations and restrictions have been imposed on the Administration's policies as a result of such challenges.

These challenges and the imposition of restrictions are the direct result of public outcry and direct public pressure on congressional lawmakers. Military aid to Guatemala was cut off in 1978 by Congress, due to public concern over the massive human rights violations under the military regime there. The large volume of mail to Washington last year opposing U.S. intervention in El Salvador brought about legislation requiring presidential "certification" of improvement in the human rights situation there as a condition to further aid. As the situation has deteriorated, the Administration has had to suffer embarrassment and increasing isolation over its "certifications" even if aid has not yet been cut. Many observers believe that U.S. soldiers would already have been sent to fight in El Salvador and other parts of Central America were it not for outspoken public opposition.

In a word, letters, telegrams, phone calls and visits to policy-makers in Washington by individuals and groups can continue to play a role in obtaining protection for Central American refugees and alleviating the conditions making them refugees. Each individual letter plays its part. To be effective, these efforts must be continued, expanded, and sustained.

How to Influence a Member of Congress

Write, Wire or Phone.

1. Write your own letter.
2. Be brief and courteous. Don't scold.
3. Be specific. Seek support for (or opposition to) a particular bill or proposal.
4. Time your letter for best effect--watch the press.
5. Thank your Members of Congress for a favorable vote or stand when you can.

Wire:

A 15-word public opinion telegram costs $2.00. Phone Western Union.

Phone:

Call the nearest local office of a congressperson.
A staff person will relay your message to Washington.
Or call Washington; (202) 224-3121 and ask to be connected to your Congressperson's office.

When specific legislation (a bill) is being considered by Congress, you can exert the most influence by writing, visiting, or calling at these points:

-Before a bill is introduced, to raise the need for the legislation.
-When a bill is introduced, to urge cosponsorship or other support.
-When a committee is considering the bill, to list specific recommendations. This will be especially effective if one of your legislators is on the committee considering the bill.
-When the bill goes to the floor for a vote.
-If your U.S. senators or U.S. representatives are not on a committee that is dealing with a bill, you may make recommendations directly to the committee chairperson or (usually better) ask your senators or representatives to take your message to the committee chairperson or to committee members.

Arrange a Meeting

Write or call to invite your Member of Congress to meet with local church members or friends. Give alternate dates or, still better, let him/her pick the date. Small groups are okay--don't promise a crowd. Have a committee prepare for the meeting. Be as well-informed as possible on specific issues. State your views clearly, briefly and in a friendly way. Invite a response. Think of the meeting as part of a longterm relationship that you want to cultivate.

Congressional Staff

Don't forget that congressional staff are often as important to lobby as the Members of Congress themselves. Committee staff and legislative aides of a representative or senator sometimes draft the bills or amendments that the congressperson sponsors or suggest the position he or she should take on legislation. Staff persons are usually available to the public. They can transmit your concerns to the legislator and convey the legislator's position to you.

Your Newspaper

A letter to the editor on a key issue before Congress can be effective. Be brief, clear, and if possible mention your congressperson(s) by name--for example by indicating the hope that he or she will support (or oppose) a measure. If the letter begins with a reference to a recent editorial or news article, so much the better. Feature articles in the newspaper or news or opinion pieces for local radio or TV stations are also possibilities.

The Congress

Decisions about U.S. refugee policy as a whole are generally left to the President--but he must consult with Congress regarding his plans. Technically, the Congress cannot change the President's plans, but practically speaking, members of Congressional committees can exert pressure on the

Administration to change its policies. Efforts to change the way Central American refugees are being treated in the U.S. can be most effective when they are focussed on Judiciary Committee members, and especially on immigration subcommittee members, since they deal with domestic immigration and refugee issues. Your own representatives should be sent copies of any correspondence as well.

Judiciary Committees

In the Senate

Strom Thurmond, Chair (R-SC)
Charles Mathias (R-MD)
Paul Laxalt (R-NV)
Orrin Hatch (R-UT)
Robert Dole (R-KS)
Alan Simpson (R-WY)
John P. East (R-NC)
Charles Grassley (R-IA)
Jeremiah Denton (R-AL)
Arlen Specter (R-PA)
Joseph R. Biden (D-DE)
Edward Kennedy (D-MA)
Robert Byrd (D-WV)
Howard Metzenbaum (D-OH)
Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ)
Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT)
Max Baucus (D-MT)
Howell Weflin (D-AL)

In the House

Peter Rodino, Chair (D-NJ)
Jack Brooks (D-TX)
Robert Kastenmeier (D-WI)
Don Edwards (D-CA)
John Conyers (D-MI)
John Seiberling (D-OH)
Romano Mazzoli (D-KY)
William J. Hughes (D-NJ)
Sam B. Hall (D-TX)
Mike Snyar (D-OK)
Patricia Schroeder (D-CO)
Dan Glickman (D-KS)
Harold Washington (D-IL)
Barney Frank (D-MA)
George Crockett (D-MI)
Charles E. Schumer (D-NY)
Bruce A. Morrison (D-CT)
Edward F. Feighan (D-OH)
Lawrence J. Smith (D-FL)
Howard L. Berman (D-CA)
Hamilton Fish (R-NY)
Carlos Moorhead (R-CA)
Henry J. Hyde (R-IL)
Thomas N. Kindness (R-OH)
Harold Sawyer (R-MI)
Dan Lungren (R-CA)
James Sensenbrenner (R-WI)
Bill McCollum (R-FL)
Clay Shaw (R-FL)
George W. Gekas (R-PA)
Michael DeWine (R-OH)

In Congress, advisory resolutions calling for the U.S. to grant extended voluntary departure status to Salvadorans in the U.S. have been offered in the Senate by Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Arizona) and in the House by Representative Ted Weiss (D-NY) during the 1982 session. These resolutions, while only advisory, have been helpful in focusing attention on the concern and may be encouraged again in the next session.

Many religious bodies have officially supported the granting of extended voluntary departure status to Salvadoran refugees in the U.S. Among those who have taken this public stand are the:

Episcopal Church
Lutheran Council in the U.S.A.
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (NCCC)
Synagogue Council of America
United Church of Christ
United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

The Conditions That Produce Refugees from Central America

Many people believe that the situation in Central America will not be resolved by providing more military aid to those governments. To the extent that this military assistance contributes to the violence there, it also exacerbates a situation that is already producing refugees, many of whom come to the U.S.

Since the President and the Secretary of State are the key decision-makers regarding foreign policy toward Central America, they must hear your views about current U.S. policy:

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

and

The Hon. George Schultz
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Many religious bodies have taken official stances regarding continued U.S. military assistance to the Salvadoran government. Those who have publicly said the U.S. should not send any more military aid include these:

-American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.
-American Friends Service Committee
-Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
-Church of the Brethren
-Episcopal Church
-Lutheran Church in America
-American Lutheran Church
-Association Evangelical Lutheran Churches
-Lutheran World Ministry
-Moravian Church in America
-National Conference of Catholic Bishops
-National Council of the Churches of Cnrist in the U.S.A.
-Presbyterian Church in the U.S.
-Reformed Church in America
-Union of American Hebrew Congregations
-United Church of Christ
-United Methodist Church
-United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.
-Unitarian Universalist Association

The Senate and House Subcommittees on Western Hemisphere foreign relations concerns are the key Congressional bodies monitoring, questioning, and sometimes influencing Administration policy.

Pressure from constituents has motivated members of these bodies to sharply question current U.S. policy in Central America; this pressure, through letters, calls and visits, needs to be kept up and increased as the U.S. role in exacerbating tension in Central America continues.

Members of Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Hemisphere Affairs:

(Not ready at press time; staff office: 202/224-2451)

Members of House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Hemisphere Affairs:

Michael J. Barnes (D-MD) Chair
Gerry E. Studds (D-MA)
Samuel Gejdenson (D-CT)
Peter Kostmayer (D-PA)
Harry Reid (D-Nevada)
Robert Garcia (D-NY)
Stephen J. Solarz (D-NY)
Robert J. Lagomarsino (R-CA)
Henry J. Hyde (R-IL)
Douglas K. Bereuter (R-Nebraska)

The Status of Central American Refugees in the U.S.

There is general agreement among religious, legal advocacy and other groups that the granting of "extended voluntary departure" status for all Salvadoran and Guatemalan nationals in the U.S. would be the most reasonable and viable measure at this time. It is a temporary measure which would not require lengthy individual processing and could be implemented immediately.

"Extended voluntary departure" is a special immigration status granted usually in blanket form for a specified period of time to all nationals in the U.S. of a particular country to avoid returning or deporting anyone to a threatening national situation. It is granted by the Attorney General only upon such advisement from the Secretary of State. It is currently in effect for Polish and Ethiopian nationals. The status is generally lifted or not renewed when the State Department decides that conditions in the home country have stabilized to the extent that people returned will be reasonable assured of safety.

Efforts to encourage the granting of extended voluntary departure need to be focused in particular on the Secretary of State.

The Honorable George Schultz
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

Media Access and Constituency Education

Print and electronic communications media are often crucial to the shaping of community perceptions and opinions on key issues such as the conflict in Central America and the resultant arrival of refugees in the U.S. While the exchange of ideas in established commercial media tends to be limited, there are a number of ways by which those limitations can be challenged by individual and collective group action.

Participants at the Central American Refugee Network Consultation held in California in February 1982 developed some perspectives and a number of concrete practical suggestions for increasing media coverage on the need for safe and humane haven for Central American refugees in the U.S.

Several suggested perspectives may be useful in guiding the content of media access efforts. These can be expressed as the needs to:

1. illuminate the human and moral concerns raised by the Central American refugee situation;

2. expand the visibility and credibility of church and local community involvement in responding to this situation;

3. focus on individual stories of refugees to personalize the issues and thereby facilitate understanding;

4. facilitate two-way communication between the public and the refugees and those working actively with them;

5. encourage involvement on a personal level by those who are motivated to respond to the issues.

The first step in an active, ongoing media access process is to gather and organize information and resources, the second is to plan an approach and the third is to get out and do it.

Gathering and organizing can include:

1. Compiling a listing of existing locally available background resources such as films, video tapes, audio tapes, news clippings, publications, reports, etc.

2. Identifying local individuals with pertinent expertise for a "speakers bureau". These should include refugees, knowledgeable community leaders, celebrities, returned missionaries and volunteers, academics and others willing to meet with the press, appear in the media and also to speak to church and community groups.

3. Developing a Press Kit.

   A press kit with basic information is a very useful item to offer local media contacts. It should include a few select articles of background information, a listing of key local contacts and know-

ledgeable persons, and a list of further resources.

Once information resources have been identified, there are a variety of options to be pursued:

1. Most important is to maintain a Media Watch: monitor news coverage of the issue in print, radio and television and respond with telephone calls, letters to the editor, opinion page pieces, articles and requests for opportunities to rebut media stories. Don't forget to include minority community, Spanish-language and religious media.

2. Develop local media contacts: find out who local media contacts are--newspaper reporters, assignment editors, editorial staff, political and religious journalists, TV/radio reporters, etc., and get to know them personally through telephone contact, letters and visits. Follow up.

   Offer them your press kit and let them know you can put them in touch with knowledgeable local experts to comment on news stories.

3. Public affairs/talk programs: contact the public affairs and program directors of your radio and local TV stations. Let them know you have information and people who could be guests on their programs to discuss the issue. The programs will welcome you back with a little follow-up.

4. Radio: see if there are local affiliates of Pacifica Radio Network and National Public Radio in your area. There may be existing programming and the opportunity to participate as guests or to develop a program of your own on the issue.

5. Public and Cable television: all local cable franchises are required to provide public access programming. They are an excellent community resource. Encourage these stations to air or rebroadcast such made-for-public-television films as El Salvador - Another Vietnam and Roses for December. Suggest that such broadcasts be followed with a live or taped panel discussion by local figures - from your speakers bureau, of course. See the Resource section for information on obtaining these films.

6. Media Events: organize specific activities--a press conference, a special forum--around the visit of an outside speaker or public figure. Choose the time and location to maximize media access and remember that personal followup calls to contacts or assignment editors the evening or morning before the activity are very important. Reporters can also be encouraged to attend a public speaking event. And "colorful" cultural events often prove attractive to the visual image-conscious TV media.

7. Volunteer and Student Support: involve the high school and college students' community in volunteer work. Contact department chairpersons, student leaders, organizations and student newspapers. Request support for volunteer services from medical interns, legal

interns, public health and social work, students, journalists, film departments, video departments, oral history projects, Latin American studies, political science, etc. Involve the students on campus and get the students off-campus to be directly involved in the issue and specific projects.

National Media Contacts: key contact persons in the East, Central and Western U.S. to whom media contacts can be referred for comprehensive regional and national overviews of conditions, issues, and responses regarding Central American refugees in the United States. These persons include:

East Coast:

Angela Berryman, American Friends Service Committee
(215) 241-7165

Mary Solberg, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
(212) 532-6350

Patrick Taran, Church World Service
(212) 870-2730

Texas Region:

Nancy Boye, Dallas Central American Refugee Program
(214) 941-3784

Midwest Region:

Renny Golden, Chicago Religious Task Force
(312) 663-4398

West Coast:

Phil Conger, The TEC Task for Central American Refugees
(602) 628-7525

Francisco Rivera, El Rescate
(213) 387-3284

Organizing a House Meeting Campaign

A strategy for organizing new people to work on behalf of Central American refugees and to address the root causes forcing them to flee.

What Is It?

House meetings are a way to discuss the issue of Central America with a small number of people by gathering in local homes. This format allows for deeper discussion and more answering of questions than a formal presentation, or a presentation with an audio-visual.

The house meeting campaign has been developed from United Farmworkers organizing techniques by the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America.

How To Set One Up

In order to set up a house meeting, one can begin by asking someone who is already supportive to invite friends and/or family into their home for a discussion of the problem and ways to participate in its resolution. If one doesn't have a list of supportive people, or it becomes exhausted, it's a good idea to speak to a friendly priest, minister, nun, etc. for contacts. If they are willing to go with you to make the contact, that is best, but at least using their name would help. The contact person might be someone already interested in the issue, or just someone who is concerned about social problems. If necessary, the person should be updated or have the issue explained including why it is essential that more people become active in changing U.S. government policy. Explain that this is being done through house meetings where a small group of people gets together for a talk, questions and answers, a chance to learn what can be done, etc. Set a time and date with this person, and be sure to check back to make sure that everything is proceeding. Arriving at the meeting early is advisable. There is more opportunity to meet the people and understand their attitudes and concerns.

What is most important to come out of this meeting is more meetings, monthly donations, and a commitment to participate in work on behalf of Central American refugees. Some people will choose to help in ways like writing letters but others will be interested in organizing events, participating in rallies, helping in the office, etc. Find out what each person's interests are so that they can be best incorporated into the work. Explain what is needed, and ask each person how they would like to participate.

The Meeting

1. Introductions - discussion about the interests and thoughts of the participants.
2. Short talk on background information; history - put the arrival of refugees here and struggles in Central America into a context.

3. Ask for questions and promote discussion on what you have said.
4. Short talk on the present situations - i.e., the treatment of refugees in the U.S., the elections in El Salvador, the situation in Guatemala, reconstruction and intervention in Nicaragua. The role of the U.S. government should be stressed.
5. Questions and discussion.
6. What local groups are doing and what each individual can do.

Speakers should be careful not to talk too long. Everyone should be involved in what is being said. Vivid stories bring the points home and liven up the presentation when intermixed with the drier facts.

The point of these smaller meetings is to come away knowing how each person can contribute, not just to speak and leave.

The House Meeting Committee

In Chicago, the Religious Task Force has organized a group of eight people to do these meetings. They are sending people in groups of two, one who feels comfortable in making the presentation (or relatively comfortable), and another who is there to learn so that she/he can do it on her/his own. These same people make the contacts for the meetings and/or the follow-up on them. The office coordinates the different meetings, matches people up in teams for them, and keeps a central file on contacts made and what they're willing to do.

Guidelines for House Meeting Speakers

Materials: guideline sheet "Options for Action"
latest legislative alerts
evaluation sheet
packet of literature

Format: 1½ - 2hr. informal "living room" gathering of 3-10 people

Process:
- introductions, ask about special interests or concern....
- present background & update on El Salvador/Central America and the refugees
- facilitate discussion
- present action possibilities and solicit participants' responses
- hospitality/refreshments

Suggestions:
- call the day before to remind hostess/host to remind the participants with a phone call, too.
- ask hostess/host to describe the group i.e. their interest, knowledge and position re: El Salvador/Central America
- be there ½ hour early to meet the hostess/host and greet the participants when they arrive
- stay within the time limit, e.g., 2 hours:

  35 min. - information
  35 min. - discussion
  20 min. - action responses
  30 min. - social

- indicate the "important" actions when asking for responses, e.g., house meetings, bail fund, monthly contributions
- encourage them to create their own action responses that would work in their community
- ask them to sign their name and action they will do on the evaluation sheet

Follow-up: Please return the evaluation sheet to the office with the names of the participants and the action responses they chose.

IMPORTANT: specify if you will contact and resource those participants as they plan and implement their actions--of if someone else should make the follow-up contact.

Developed by the
Chicago Religious Task Force
on Central America
(312) 663-4398

© Daily News of Los Angeles/Lori Valesko

WAITING. . .

This Salvadoran refugee supplements her income by collecting aluminum cans. Her son and daughter were killed in El Salvador. Most Salvadorans live in a world of fear – afraid of being apprehended by U.S. immigration authorities, but even more afraid of returning to their violence-ridden homeland.

CWS/Mel Lehman

Above: The involvement of the churches has been an important part of the struggle for recognition by Central American refugees in this country. The Riverside Church in New York hosted a thirteen-day hunger fast by seven persons including Sister Darlene Cuccinello (above, right) and two of the four Salvadoran refugees.

Left: A health clinic at "El Rescate," a program to aid Central American refugees in the Los Angeles area which is supported by local churches and national denominations through Church World Service and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. "El Rescate" literally means "the rescue."

Santana Chirino Amaya Central American Refugee Committee/Joaquin Romero

Sanctuary

"When a church has to break the law in order to provide refuge for homeless people, the struggle for justice has reached a new stage. Now the pastoral has merged with the political, service is prophetic and love is a subversive activity."

Rev. Sid Mohn, officiating at welcoming service for the "Vargas" family at Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ (Chicago) public sanctuary, August 9, 1982.

Introduction

In the Refugee Act of 1980, the U.S. Congress adopted as law the standards of the UN Convention and Protocol Relating to Refugees. According to this, the U.S. should accord refugee or asylum status to persons who cannot return to their country of origin because of persecution or fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion. These standards clearly apply to Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees.

Amnesty International and other human rights monitoring organizations have documented the extreme continuing repression of the governments of El Salvador and Guatemala toward the civilian populations of both countries. Since 1981, over 36,000 Salvadorans have been killed. "Political murders in El Salvador have risen markedly since the Reagan Administration certified on July 27, 1982 that the U.S. backed government was making progress in protecting human rights, according to the U.S. Embassy and Roman Catholic Church officials." (Chicago Sun-Times, 8-29-82) In Guatemala, just since the March 23, 1982 coup, over 2,000 Guatemalans have been killed. At least 90% of this slaughter has come from the hands of government security forces which have been armed and trained primarily by the U.S. government.

"Murder, torture and disappearances have reached 'horrifying proportions' in Guatemala and El Salvador, the Roman Catholic organization Pax Christi charged." (Chicago Tribune, 8-27-82) "Following the elections in March this year in Guatemala and El Salvador, violations of basic human rights have reached horrifying proportions rather than diminishing," the group told the UN Human Rights Subcommission of Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.

According to estimates compiled from UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees) and church sources over 500,000 Salvadorans have fled their homeland since conflict reached civil war proportions in early 1980. At least 200,000 more have left or been driven from their homes but still remain in El Salvador. The Roman Catholic Bishops Conference of Guatemala recently estimated that as many as one million Guatemalans have been made refugees by the repression and warfare in that country. Over 200,000 have fled into exile, primarily to Mexico. Estimates drawn from U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) data indicate that from 200,000 to 250,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans have arrived in the U.S. in the last three years.

Even though Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees meet the requirements of U.S. Code, Refugee Act of 1980, and are recognized as refugees by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the U.S. State Department refuses to grant them proper status. Of the over 15,000 asylum applications by Salvadoran refugees in the past two years, only 67 have been granted. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) continues to apprehend and deport Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees back to their homelands to face possible torture and death. Actual cases of refugees deported and then grossly tortured and murdered have been well documented. Currently an average of 1,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans are deported every month.

Sanctuary offers a concrete and direct way to challenge the inhuman policy of the U.S. government in Central America and of the INS, as well as providing a direct service to the refugees created as a result of these policies. The people of Central America and the United States, and more specifically, the Salvadoran and Guatemalan communities in the U.S. and the religious community can only benefit greatly from the sanctuary project.

Historical And Theological Basis For Sanctuary

The tradition of sanctuary in both the Jewish and Christian communities is a living, evolving and transforming story. At different times and places, under varied circumstances, the significance of sanctuary has been recovered and taken on new meanings. Today is one of those times. Here is one of those places. Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees, the victims of torture and repression supported by U.S. government policy in Central America and INS policies in the U.S., provide the circumstances.

In the Old Testament and the New Testament, sanctuary is a place of life-giving mystery. Sanctuary was to be a place separated off from the world in which quite different arrangements than those of the world would occur. Sanctuary is a place of holiness -- a place where things, people or events could be sanctified; claiming them for God and God's purpose. The sanctuary is a place where the ultimate authority of God is proclaimed; where the name of God is invoked; where it is clear that we worship and recognize in action a law higher than that of government or commerce.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition sanctuary has a dual meaning. It is both a place where a community of faith gathers for worship and a place of refuge and protection. Because of this dual meaning of holiness and refuge, sanctuary is a particularly potent image for churches and synagogues as we consider our responsibility for exceedingly vulnerable refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. As communities of faith we are called upon to bring these two meanings of sanctuary into a powerful unity. The place of worship is to serve as a place of protection. Love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. Faithfulness to God by preventing harm to sisters and brothers requires resistance to government practices that would do them harm. The sanctuary as a place symbolizing holiness points to the primacy of God's compassion and justice over human authorities and it symbolizes the need of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees for protection against inhuman policies and actions of the U.S. government.

From the earliest times, sanctuary has had a deeply religious-political significance. It is the recognition of the moral limits of a civil order and the ultimacy of the divine claim on human allegiance. In the Old Testament we read that sanctuaries became places where persons guilty of manslaughter were given protection from avengers (Exodus 21:12-14). Because of the holiness of these places, avengers dared not seek retribution. Sanctuaries, which included "cities of refuge" (Numbers 35:9-34) as well, served the humane purpose of preventing acts of vengeance.

This same tradition was recognized both in Roman Law and in Medieval Canon Law. Furthermore, English Common Law provided that sanctuaries could be places of refuge for accused criminals in order to provide a due process for determining guilt or to enable the accused to leave the country in safety. Potentially, every church could serve as such a sanctuary. Later, sanctuaries were extended to places other than churches, such as designated "cities of refuge."

There is also the great historical tradition of sanctuary in the United States. We are a nation of immigrants and refugees. A remarkable story which illustrates the understanding of sanctuary in colonial America occurred in the New Haven colony in the 17th century.

Two men from England who had signed the death warrant of Charles I escaped to America when Charles II was restored to the throne. The King's agents sought the assistance of New Haven authorities to capture the escapees. The authorities delayed the agents by saying that no action should be taken on the Sabbath. So the agents had to attend a service of worship and hear the Reverend John Davenport preach a sermon from the text Isaiah 16:3, "Hide the outcasts and betray not her/him here that wandereth; let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler."

The authorities of New Haven went further in protecting the political refugees by broadcasting the agents' intentions at a public meeting. The New Haven authorities made clear indeed to their people what they expected of them. The King's messengers searched in vain for the Colonels, receiving everywhere polite consideration but finding no trace of their quarry. At last they returned to Boston, empty-handed and enraged.

The tradition of sanctuary was appropriated anew in the "underground railroad" which provided refuge and protection for fugitive slaves. In 1850, Congress passed the Fugitive Slave Law. Suspected runaway slaves could be arrested on request, or from sight, without a warrant and turned over to a claimant. The only "proof" required was the claimant's word that the slaves were his/hers. It was all perfectly legal just like the deportation of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees today.

At the same time resistance developed. Lots of it. Opponents of slavery condemned the law, held public forums, formed anti-slavery societies, circulated petitions and made bold heroic efforts in open defiance of the law. There were slave rescue attempts and some were successful. On February 15, 1851, waiter Fred Wilkins, or Shadrach, as he was known, was seized from his job and rushed to the Boston courthouse. While Shadrach was still in court,

a group of fifty Black people from the neighborhood pushed into the courtroom, lifted him in the air, and spirited him to a waiting carriage. Shadrach and his rescuers moved away "like a black squall." The rescue was so fast, nobody even pursued Shadrach. His rescuers were all eventually found not guilty by a sympathetic jury.

Religious women and men of local congregations, like First Congregational Church of Chicago, and many Churches in what is now known as DuPage County, played an important role in the underground railroad. These congregations functioned as centers of resistance against the oppressiveness of the established order of racism and slavery, risking prosecution by Federal authorities.

The meaning of sanctuary was again reclaimed and reinterpreted in the context of the movement opposing U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Draft resisters and AWOL servicemen entered church sanctuaries with communities of support to express their profound conscientious objection to war. These sanctuaries dramatized the immorality of the U.S. intervention and the significance of religious centers of worship as places where resistance to the war was proclaimed as the faithful witness of religious people.

We live in a time of encroachment. Not only has a demonic domination been unleashed that is profaning the human through torture and terror and that has forgotten that human beings are created in the image of God, but the very sacredness of the earth is being violated. Whole areas must be officially designated as sanctuaries for birds and other wildlife to protect them from extinction. We live in a time when the wilderness must be protected from the onslaught of private developers, bull-dozers, and strip-mining. All around us we find the need to sanctify spaces in order to protect the sacredness of the earth, its animals, and its people.

The meaning of sanctuary is a living tradition. The various ways that the worship of God requires the special protection of vulnerable peoples has taken profound specific expression in changing circumstances. Now is the time for the religious community to make a place of refuge for those whose only crime is that they are fleeing from terrorism and repression. It is time for us to provide sanctuary for those refugees who are fleeing the blood vengeance of the political powers of El Salvador and Guatemala. It is time to provide a safe place and to cry out loud, "Basta! Enough! The blood stops here at our doors!"

This is the time for us to claim our sacred right to invoke the name of God - to push back all the powers of encroachment and violation and profanation in the name of the One to whom we owe our ultimate allegiance. This is the time to tell Caesar and his henchmen, "NO TRESPASSING, FOR THE GROUND ON WHICH YOU WALK IS HOLY."

In this desperately important situation, the theological significance of sanctuary emerges with clarity and power. First, for congregations to give sanctuary to Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees is an expression of compassion. Present U.S. policy dictates the arrest of these refugees and rapid deportation to their homelands where persecution and death are the likely consequences. For people of faith these refugees are not aliens but are our sisters and brothers. The consequences of deportation to these our

neighbors are so brutal that persons of sensitized conscience must cry out in protest. In the name of God, practices which consign persons to suffering and death must cease.

Second, for congregations to give sanctuary to these refugees is to resist injustice. Congregations are called by God to seek justice in the land as an expression of their faith in God and their love of neighbor. Currently, Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees are regarded as "illegals" by the U.S. government. They are not granted the status of political refugees whereby they would be given temporary asylum in the U.S. Not only are the U.S. practices of deportation unjust, they are also contrary to International Law and U.S. Code. Sanctuary dramatizes the injustices of the U.S. government and the just claim of refugees for protection from persecution.

Third, for congregations to give sanctuary to these refugees is a sign to the wide North American community of the plight of these brothers and sisters. Sanctuary is an act of hospitality. It means welcoming the refugees, not sending them away. It means supporting and assisting the refugees in their struggle. It means assuming their burdens as our own. Sanctuary, therefore, is not only a symbol of resistance; it is also a symbol of hope. It communicates visibly and dramatically to the North American people a call to a national responsibility.

The meanings of sanctuary are rich and powerful. In our time as in previous times, our worship places are needed as places of protection. As we respond to the urgent need of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees in our midst, sanctuary is an expression of compassion, a symbol of resistance against injustice and a sign of hope. In these ways sanctuary is a faithful response to the liberating God who calls us into solidarity with the oppressed.

Common Questions

1. What is Sanctuary?

Sanctuary is in essence a public welcoming of undocumented Central American refugees into the protection and care of the church. Given the conditions and needs faced by these refugees in this country, offering sanctuary must usually include the offer of sponsorship to the refugee or refugees, that is, the commitment to provide for their basic human needs and to assist them in becoming independent and self sufficient.

2. What are the Legal Risks?

Even though Salvadorans and Guatemalans seeking haven in the U.S. meet the refugee definition of the Refugee Act of 1980, the U.S. State Department and the INS refuse to grant refugee status to them. According to the State Department and the INS, the principal reason for the influx of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees is to seek employment. Thus they are viewed as economic refugees and treated as "illegal aliens".

Until the State Department and the INS change their policy on Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees to conform to International Law and U.S. Code, those who provide help to Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees are subject to prosecution under the Immigration and Nationality Act. To date, none of the congregations or individuals participating in the sanctuary project have been arrested or prosecuted.

"We're not about to send investigators into a church and start dragging people out in front of the TV cameras," said Bill Joyce, assistant general counsel to the INS. "We'll just wait them out, wait until they leave the church. This is just a political thing that the churches are dreaming up to get publicity - a game to pressure the government to allow Salvadorans to stay here. If we thought it was a significant problem, then maybe we'd take a look at it. But there are plenty of illegal aliens out there." (Christian Science Monitor, 8-30-82)

Though no one has been prosecuted to date, everyone involved with the sanctuary project is subject to possible prosecution on the following charges, for each refugee aided:

1. Harboring of Undocumented Aliens: Section 274 (a), 8 U.S.C. (a). Felony, $2000.00 and 5 years
2. Conspiracy to Harbor: $10,000.00 and/or 5 years
3. Smuggling: $2000.00 and/or 5 years

Asked why the Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ, which inaugurated public sanctuary in Chicago on July 24, 1982, was willing to break the law and risk the consequences, Barb Lagoni, chairperson of the church council said, "These are dangerous times. When thousands of innocent people are still being victimized by U.S. supported violence in El Salvador and Guatemala, it is time to escalate the struggle for justice. Dangerous times call for risky responses. The consequences that may happen to Wellington are minimal in comparison to the pain that happens every day to the people of El Salvador and Guatemala."

The best security for public sanctuary, regardless of the political climate, is the most widespread public support and publicity.

3. Do Refugees Have to Stay in the Church Building?

We recommend that the refugees stay in the church building for one to two weeks. This enables an assessment of how INS will react and gives the refugees an opportunity to feel secure. During this initial period of assessment, 24-hour monitors need to be maintained on the church premises.

Many of the refugees, having recently fled excessive violence in El Salvador and Guatemala, need this period in the church to adjust. For example: one women arriving for sanctuary expressed the fear that the police or national guard would machine-gun the church. It took her a

week to overcome this fear.

Arrange a meeting with the family and a lawyer to explain refugee rights and how to proceed should they be arrested. This should include role-playing and may need to be done more than once. As soon as you and the refugees feel it is safe, the refugees can begin going out of the church building. They should be accompanied until it is reasonably clear that they will be safe. In about two weeks the family should be able to move into their residence for resettlement.

4. How Long Must We Be Responsible?

There have been families completely self-sufficient within one month. Some families need help for six months; some for 12 months. WE HOPE THAT THERE WOULD BE A FRIENDSHIP DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE SPONSOR AND THE REFUGEE(S) THAT WOULD CONTINUE FOREVER. The friendship offers an ear to hear and a hand, heart and brain to help whenever such is needed.

The sponsor acknowledges its moral commitment to assist in the resettlement of a refugee family with the goal of helping that family become self-sufficient, self-supporting, contributing members of the community as quickly as possible, and to provide legal assistance as long as U.S. policy denies them legal refugee status.

5. What Is The Bottom Line?

In money? It depends on family size, employability, levels of skill, language capability, and prices of suitable housing, which are generally the greatest outlay. There have been parishes or parishioner-owned properties donated rent-free for a year to help toward self-sufficiency. Additional cash outlay will go toward some food items not contributed and usually for some clothing items (shoes, personal items, perhaps a good winter coat). Also, a cash outlay will be required should the family or one of its members be arrested by INS. The bail fund need not be a cash account but may consist of pledges accessible on demand.

The bottom line of sponsorship is not money. The real bottom line is the opportunity for expressing love/justice; of helping; of caring; the offering of time, talent, patience, and eventual ending of violence and terror in Central America so that the refugees may return to their homelands. An element of the bottom line is the commandment given in John 13:34, "...love one another; even as I have loved you..."

When you agree to offer sanctuary to a refugee family, a representative from your congregation should contact the Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America (CRTFCA), 407 S. Dearborn, Room 370, Chicago, IL 60605, (313) 427-2533.

Prepared by:

Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America and the Tucson Ecumenical Council Central America Task Force

September, 1982

(See resource section for more information on Sanctuary.)

RELEASING REFUGEES FROM DETENTION

Bonding Refugees Out:

Once apprehended by INS, Central Americans--like other undocumented immigrants--in order to be released must post bond to guarantee that they will appear for deportation hearings or other proceedings. INS practice in most of the U.S. over the last three years has been to set relatively higher bonds--$3,000 to $5,000 per person--for Salvadorans than for some other nationalities. Such bonds can often be lowered by making a legal request for a bond redetermination hearing, although generally bonds are simply lowered to $1,000 to $2,000.

Funds and/or collateral must be secured in order to post bond. In many communities, bail-bond agenices will arrange to post bonds on the basis of taking cash deposits of 10% to 20% of the bond together with collateral pledges or personal guarantees from "established community members" to reimburse the agency should the bondee not appear for a hearing and thus forfeit bail.

It has been the experience of local projects and church groups that a personal relationship between the person being bonded out and the individual or group providing the bond virtually guarantees that the bond will not be forfeited.

Both parties tend to develop a sense of mutual responsibility. The refugee can have a sense of security and support in dealing with INS while those providing bond can commit themselves to insuring that the refugee will not be deported.

Release on Personal Recognizance

In Phoenix, Arizona, local church and legal activists through the valley Religious Task Force on Central America worked out an agreement with the local INS office for the release without bond of detained Salvadorans into the care of local churches. The agreement was based on the assurance provided by local churches through the Task Force that they would work to see that the Salvadorans would appear at hearings and provide food, clothing, shelter and other essentials in the meantime.

While such an agreement may be very unlikely in large metropolitan or "high impact" areas elsewhere, the Phoenix precedent could serve to facilitate similar agreements in other communities in the U.S. For more information, contact:

Valley Religious Task Force
c/o Rev. James Oines
Alzona Lutheran Church
3366 W. Roosevelt Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85009

(602) 278-0958

6

Local Direct Service Projects

A listing with summary descriptions of key local projects around the United States providing legal and social services for Central American refugees.

Local Direct Service Projects

There are few social and legal services available to Central American refugees arriving in the U.S. Since most who flee their homelands and seek haven in the U.S. do not have documents, they live in fear of detention, apprehension and deportation by U.S. authorities. As "illegals," they are neither authorized to work nor eligible for emergency public assistance.

Because they live in fear, most Central American refugees, like other undocumented immigrants, do not seek out or ask for assistance even in medical emergencies. While many face both physical and emotional traumas as a result of their experiences, few seek help until they are, literally, dying. Few know that they have any rights at all. Because of their past experiences and their fear, the very sight of a policeman can be terrifying.

Recognizing the dire plight of these refugees and their need for protection and assistance in the U.S., inter-faith groups, sometimes in conjunction with immigrant legal rights groups, have established special direct service projects in a number of communities. These projects are attempting to respond to the needs of hundreds, even thousands, of refugees for legal and emergency social services. The demands made on these projects are far greater than the resources available to them. They are in need of virtually any and all types of support that individuals and groups can offer.

Following is a partial listing of such projects around the U.S. Contact the one in your area to find out how you can help. Some areas with substantial Central American Refugee communities still lack any organized response to their needs. If there is no local project in your community you may want to contact one in your region for guidance on what to do. Most of these projects listed are willing to provide advice and/or assistance in neighboring communities in their region.

Understanding the crucial need to aid Central American refugees for whom no other resources are available, Church World Service and the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service have been assisting a number of these projects with financial and organizational support.

Eastern U.S.

CARECEN (Central American Refugee Center)
1801 Columbia Road, NW, Suite 103
Washington, DC 20009

Contact: Patrice Perillie

Phone: (202) 328-9799

CARECEN provides primarily legal services in the Washington, DC area where at least 30,000 Salvadorans reside. Referral is provided for medical, housing, employment, ESL, and other social services.

Centro Presente
634 Massachusetts Avenue, Office 205
Cambridge, MA 02139

Contact: Sister Rose Marie Cummins,OP

Phone: (617) 497-9080

Provides legal and social services to Central Americans in Boston area, as well as advocacy and education concerning refugee rights and conditions in the U.S.

New York Circus
P.O. Box 37
Times Square Station
New York, NY 10108

Contact: Ms. Darlene Kalke

Phone: (212) 663-8112

A "Central American Program" within a New York area Center for Immigrants Rights being established by the Circus, has a New York area ecumenical group of religious and lay members. The project provides legal assistance, social service referral, and community training for paralegal advocates to assist in meeting some of the largely unmet needs of 30,000 to 60,000 Central Americans in the New York metropolitan area.

El Rescate-Nova
P.O. Box 5555
Arlington, VA 22205

Contact: Ms. Juel Kamke

Phone: (703) 920-7760

The new ecumenical project now providing direct services to the Central American refugee community in Northern Virginia, estimated to number over 11,000. Basic services include legal and social assistance and community education.

Central U.S.

Border Association for Refugees
from Central America (BARCA)
Texas Legal Rural Aid Inc.
316 South Closner Street
Edinberg, TX 78539

Contact: Mr. Jose Acosta

Phone: (512) 383-5673

BARCA is an ecumenical advocacy and direct service project in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. It provides assistance to Central American refugees in areas of legal, financial, social and pastoral support and advocacy.

Central American Refugee Program
Greater Dallas Community of Churches
2906 Swiss Avenue
Dallas, TX 75209

Contact: Ms. Nancy Boye

Phone: (214) 824-8680

An ecumencial project providing local legal and social services to prevent deportation and allow refugees to meet own needs, emphasizing volunteer and church resources for several thousand Central Americans in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area. It also assists in the development of refugee self-help organization and provides state-wide communication and coordination among local projects.

Chicago Religious Task Force
407 S. Dearborn Street
Chicago, IL 60605

Contact: Mr. Dan Dale

Phone: (312) 427-2533

This ecumenical organization coordinates legal and social services for the Chicago area where 15,000 refugees are estimated to live. Advocacy and sanctuary efforts have been a major focus.

Ecumenical Immigration Services
821 General Pershing Street
New Orleans, LA 70115

Contact: Ms. Evangeline Abriel

Phone: (504) 895-0395

Church-based legal assistance project designed to assist Central American refugees in New Orleans area where an estimated 30,000 refugees reside.

Proyecto Libertad
301 E. Madison
Harlingen, TX 78550

Contact: Ms. Lisa Brodyaga

Phone: (512) 425-9555

The "Proyecto" has a Central American refugee legal caseload over 1,000 asylum cases, one of the largest in the country. It is located close to the Los Fresnos INS detention center through which an estimated 400 Central American refugees have been expelled from the U.S. each month. The project's efforts are directed to help stop deportations and raise bond funds as well as continuing with asylum cases.

Dallas Central American Refugee Project
P.O. Box 223641
Dallas, TX 75222

(214) 941-3784

Western U.S.

Central American Refugee Project
115 Diamond Street
San Francisco, CA 94114

Contact: Ms. Sandra Gutierrez

Phone: (415) 621-3629

Provides legal and social services to Central Americans in the San Francisco area where an estimated 80,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans live.

Central American Refugee Project
Valley Religious Task Force
802 South First Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Contact: Mr. Juan Rascon

Phone: (602) 257-1870

The ecumenical project serving the needs of Central American refugees in the Phoenix area. The Task Force's Central American Project provides legal services and social services through efforts of local congregations and volunteers, and advocacy and educational efforts.

El Rescate
1345 South Burlington Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90006

Contact: Ms. Linda Garrett

Phone: (213) 387-7730

El Rescate, working under the auspices of the Southern California Ecumenical Council, is the key service provider for the largest Central American community in the U.S. Over 200,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans, many of whom have arrived in the last two years, are estimated to be in the Los Angeles area. El Rescate's efforts include advocacy and educational work as well as basic emergency legal and social services.

Salvadoran Refugee Project
Washington Association of Churches
4759 15th Avenue, NE
Seattle, WA 98105

Contact: Loren E. Arnett

Phone: (206) 525-1213

The project is developing a reliable structure to meet the legal and social service needs of some 1,000 Salvadoran refugees in Washington State, relying primarily on development of volunteer service networks. Functions include legal aid, social services, mobilizing church resources, and aiding refugee self-help organization.

Western U.S. (Cont'd)

Tucson Ecumenical Council
Task Force for Central American Refugees
317 West 23rd Street
Tucson, AZ 85713

(602) 623-6857

TEC, in close cooperation with the community-based immigration counseling center Concilio Manzo, responds to needs of Central American asylum seekers coming into South Arizona through four basic program areas: (1) Legal services to assure due process with adequate legal representation, (2) Bail bond strategy to bond out of detention ten persons per week with over 700 released to date, (3) social and pastoral services and (4) advocacy and education work addressing the national issues.

Central American Refugee Defense Fund
297 Lee Street
Oakland, CA 94610

Contact: Ms. Carolyn Patty Blum
Mr. Marc Van der Hout

Phone: (415) 451-2846

A special legal advocacy project attempting to expand the criteria for gaining political asylum in the U.S. for refugees from Central America. In addition to litigating "test cases," the project offers training conferences for legal workers across the country.

Centro de Asuntos Migratorios
835 "D" Avenue
National City, CA 92050

Contact: Ms. Leonor Lozano-Ramirez

Phone: (714) 474-6678

The ecumenical service project serving the San Diego area. CAM serves as the sponsor agency for the Imperial Valley Immigration Project which provides legal advocacy and representation at the INS detention camp at El Centro.

Valley Religious Task Force
3366 West Roosevelt Street
Phoenix, AZ 85009

(602) 257-1870

Pomona Council of Churches
1753 North Park Avenue
Pomona, CA 91768

(714) 622-3806

7

Legal Rights and Alternatives

A summary of the legal rights of undocumented persons in the United States to which all Central American refugees arriving in the U.S. are entitled. This section includes brief summaries of asylum and residency statuses, for which some Central Americans may be eligible, and of Extended Voluntary Departure Status. Material in this section has been extracted from a more lengthy unpublished manual prepared by Michael S. Hooper, Executive Director of the National Emergency Coalition for Haitian Refugees.

Legal Rights of Undocumented Aliens/Asylum Seekers

All people in the United States, whatever their immigration status, have certain rights which the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) must respect and cannot deny. These fundamental rights are guaranted by the United States Constitution, immigration laws and regulations, and by international human rights law. While there is no basic right to enter the United States, and while illegal aliens have considerably fewer rights than resident aliens, the INS is required by law to respect these fundamental rights. INS cannot discriminate against or punish an alien for exercising his/her rights.

Following is a general summary of basic immigration rights applicable to circumstances faced by undocumented asylum-seekers in the U.S.:

1. In their homes:

   Aliens have a legal right to not admit INS agents into their home unless the authorities have a warrant signed by a judge. They can refuse to open the door or to close it immediately when they discover authorities at their door. Aliens have the right to refuse to talk or to answer questions or to show any documents to agents unless there is a warrant which names specified documents, such as passport or bank book. If agents use force to enter illegally, details should be noted and communicated to a lawyer.

2. On the street:

   If stopped and questioned on the street, aliens have the right to remain silent. They do not have to show any documents other than a green card if they have one. While they still may be arrested, it is better to say and show nothing and to insist on contacting a lawyer immediately. Providing any information, unless advised to do so by a lawyer, may complicate later legal proceedings.

3. In the workplace:

   Immigration agents must have either a warrant or the permission of the owner and the employer to enter a place of work. Again, an alien has the right to remain silent and not show any documents other than a green card.

4. If one is stopped, detained or imprisoned:

A person, no matter what his or her immigration status is, has:

a. The right not to answer questions from anyone about nationality, identity, residence or any other question; one's name can be given so that an attorney, friend or family can contact the detainee while in detention;

b. The right not to sign any paper or consent form, and to retract anything already signed until the moment of departure from the country;

c. The right to speak with a lawyer before answering questions put by the police, the INS, or Federal agents;

d. The right to secure a lawyer from a list which INS must provide of legal service offices and voluntary agencies in the area with lawyers who will represent persons without fee;

e. The right to request a public hearing upon arrest, and to get a hearing within seven days;

f. The right to receive within 24 hours the charges against one in writing and an indication of the bond set--bond that is not excessive and allows one to pay it and be free to prepare one's defense;

g. The right to apply for political asylum if one has a "well-founded fear of persecution" in one's own country and if the persecution is because of race, religion, membership in a particular social group or political opinion.

h. The right to appeal most decisions by the INS to higher judicial authority.

5. In detention:

All persons held in detention by INS have the right to use the telephone to communicate with a lawyer and/or family. Detainees have the right to humane conditions, including adequate housing, food, water, medical care, and to toilets, showers, soap and the basic necessities of personal care.

6. The importance of silence:

To deport anyone, the INS has to prove that;

1. A person is <u>not</u> a citizen of the U.S. and,
2. That person does not have permission to stay in the U.S.

If INS sees papers or is given information, it can and will use that information to expedite deportation proceedings. If one

remains silent, INS may not possess enough information to deport. Even if one is arrested, it is important to remain silent until he or she has been able to talk with a lawyer.

Rules of Security: Central American refugees are advised to follow these rules:

1. Don't tell anyone about your immigration situation.
2. Don't carry identification that shows your nationality.
3. Don't open your door to people you don't know.
4. Don't drive without a license.
5. Conduct yourself well in public; don't drink liquor in public; don't involve yourself in unnecessary problems that might call attention to yourself; pay your bills.
6. If you have problems at work contact a lawyer or labor specialist; don't argue with or threaten your boss or co-workers.
7. If the police or INS detains you don't try to escape or resist captures. Don't allow them to intimidate you - give your name, remain silent until you talk to a lawyer.

In dealing with INS:

1. Make and keep a copy of every single paper you give to INS.
2. If you send your original documents to the INS, send two photocopies along or you will not get the originals back.
3. Submit papers in person, and keep the filing receipt in a safe place.
4. Pay by check if you can, since the back of the check will show that date of filing and the receipt numbers assigned by the INS.
5. TALK TO A LAWYER OR QUALIFIED REPRESENTATIVE if you have any questions at all.

Legal Alternatives to Deportation

Political Asylum

At present, the principal legal alternative to deportation for Central American refugees in the U.S. is to apply for individual "political asylum" status. This is a temporary status that provides protection from deportation, allows a stay in the U.S. for one-year renewable periods, and gives permission to work in the United States.

The United States has historically placed a high priority on granting refuge to persons who are forced to flee their homeland. One may apply for asylum in the U.S. if he/she possesses a well-founded fear of persecution if returned because of political opinions, or on account of race, religion, nationality or membership in a social group.

The United States government is bound by international treaty and domestic laws to give asylum seekers a fair hearing at which time a case can be fully presented. To apply for asylum one must fill out several rather complex forms and provide extensive supplemental information. These forms are identified as INS form I-589 and the Supplemental Questionnaire and can be obtained from local INS offices. A lawyer or agency representative should help complete these forms, and to assemble the supplemental documents that are crucial to supporting individual claims. These completed forms must show that not only does one fear persecution, but that this fear is based on occurrences which are believable by outside observers. The asylum applicant, not the INS, has the burden of proving this fear of persecution.

However, applying for asylum does not by any means guarantee that the applicant will receive it. The INS, following negative advisory opinions by the U.S. State Department, has denied asylum to the vast majority of Salvadoran and Guatemalan applicants whose cases have been decided in the last two years. In Fiscal Year 1981, of the 156 applications by Salvadorans which were decided, 154 were denied.

Many lawyers recommend that Central Americans not apply for asylum unless and until they are apprehended. Once an application is filed, the adjudication (legal decision-making) process moves towards probable denial and consequent necessity of continuing a case into the costly and time-consuming appeals process.

Central Americans who may want to apply for asylum are urged to contact the Central American refugee project in their area, find out about their rights, and then decide if they simply want to wait until they are apprehended--if they are apprehended--to file an application for asylum.

It is important to remember that the request for asylum can be submitted at any time before one is deported. If one is already in deportation proceedings when the request for asylum is made, a request should be made that the proceedings be adjourned pending the request. If one has already been ordered to be excluded or deported, a request must be made to withhold deportation while the asylum application is being prepared. Once a person has declared his/her intention to apply for asylum, that person cannot legally be expelled or deported until the application is denied and all appeals of that decision have been exhausted.

If a request for asylum is denied by a District Director of the INS, one can again claim asylum before an Immigration Judge during the course of deportation proceedings.

Residency

It may be possible to become a permanent resident of the United States (get a "green card") if one has certain relatives who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents, or if one can do work that is needed in the U.S. and has a job offer. This is a rather lengthy and complex process and should be done only with the advice of a lawyer or qualified representative.

One may be able to get a green card if he or she has:

- a husband or wife who is a U.S. citizen; this is called "immediate relative";
- a husband or wife who is a permanent resident; this is called "second preference";
- a parent who is a U.S. citizen. If one is under 21 and unmarried, this is called "immediate relative"; if over 21 and unmarried, this is called "second preference" and to qualify one must be married;
- a brother whose sister is over age 21 who is a U.S. citizen; this is called "fifth preference";
- a child who is over 21 years old who is a U.S. citizen; this is called "immediate relative."

No other realtives will be able to help. A son or daughter with a green card cannot bring in his/her parents or brothers and sisters. Immigration often checks marriages very carefully to see if the relationship is real or the person married just to get a green card.

If a person is here illegally and there is a long waiting list for the appropriate preference, one should be very careful about sending in an application to INS. INS may try to locate and deport the applicant. A lawyer or qualified representative should always be consulted before taking any action.

Extended Voluntary Departure

This is a special administrative measure which could be utilized to provide a blanket stay on deportation or expulsion of all Salvadoran and/or Guatemalan nationals currently in the U.S. Extended voluntary departure is an optional measure under INS operating procedures by which all nationals of a specified country present in the U.S., regardless of legal status, are granted blanket, temporary permission to remain. It is granted for a defined period of time and it can be accompanied by work authorization.

According to the INS operating instructions, the measure can be implemented to avoid deporting or returning persons to a country in which conditions of natural disaster or civil strife would place them in unusual danger. INS has only implemented it upon recommendation of the Secretary of State.

In recent years it has been applied for Ugandans, Lebanese during the civil war, Iranians at the overthrow of the Shah, Nicaraguans mid-1979 to 1980 (at the end of the civil war and for some months after the ouster of Somoza), for Polish nationals since the imposition of martial law in Poland, and intermittently for Ethiopians.

Numerous and frequent appeals to the current Administration have been made by Congressional, religious, legal, and community groups supporting implementation of Extended Voluntary Departure status for Salvadorans. To date, however, the Administration has indicated that it considers most Salvadorans arriving in the U.S. to be economically motivated and that implementation of the status is therefore both unnecessary and inappropriate. (See the "Focus on Washington" section in this guide.)

8

Sources for More Information

Listings of involved national organizations, publications, audio-visuals, and of regional speakers' bureaus.

Organizations

REFUGEE CONCERNS

Church World Service, Immigration and Refugee Program, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115 (212) 870-2730

Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Service, Central American Concerns, 360 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010 (212) 532-6350

National Center for Immigrants Rights, 1550 West 8th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90017 (213) 487-2531

CENTRAL AMERICA

Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America, Room 633, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115 (212) 870-3383 Provides data and coordinates church actions on Central America.

Religious Task Force on Central America, 1747 Conn. Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 387-7652 Newsletter and action alerts on Central America.

National Network(s) in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, 930 F Street, NW, Washington, DC 20004 Publish newsletters, organize legislative campaigns and other actions, contact points for national networks of solidarity groups.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Office, National Council of Churches, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115 (212) 870-2424 Advocates for human rights on behalf of NCC with government and private organizations. Monthly newsletter, Human Rights Perspectives.

Office of International Justice & Peace, U.S. Catholic Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005 (202) 654-6812 Materials, resources and legislative action on human rights and justice in the context of Catholic social teaching.

American Friends Service Committee, Human Rights Desk, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 (215) 241-7165.

Amnesty International, 308 W. 58th Street, New York, NY 10019 (212) 582-4440. Worldwide human rights organization for the release of prisoners of conscience.

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

IMPACT, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002 (202) 546-3202. An interreligious legislative information and action network. It addresses a

broad spectrum of issues pertaining to social justice and international peace, reflecting the concerns of sponsoring Protestant, Roman Catholic and Jewish groups. Newsletter.

Coalition for a New Foreign & Military Policy, 120 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002 (202) 546-8400 Unites 46 national religious, labor, peace, research and social action organizations working for a peaceful, non-interventionist and demilitarized U.S. foreign policy.

Resource List

Central America and U.S. Foreign Policy

Books and Articles:

"Guide to U.S. Military Aid & Strategy in Central America," 12 pp., 1982. A factual analysis, with listing of U.S. corporations supplying arms to Central America. Useful resource for adult, college & high school, church, union, or community groups. Published by and available from NARMIC, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102, $.50 each; $20/100; $90/500.

"The U.S. War in Central America," April, 1982. Special issue of Sojourner Magazine focusing on the roots of the crisis in Central America, U.S. policy, and the role of the Christian community. Available from Sojourners, 1309 L Street, NW Washington, D.C. 20005.

Under the Eagle: U.S. Intervention in Central America and the Caribbean, Jenny Pearce, 1981, 273 pp. Excellent historical survey of U.S. intervention and its consequences in the region. Includes solid historical and socio-economic data with numerous short excerpts and graphs from other sources. Available from South End Press, 302 Columbus Ave., Boston, MA 02116, $7.50 plus postage. Also available from NISGUA, 930 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20004.

Dollars and Dictators, The Resource Center, 1982, 272 pp. Complete description of U.S. activity in Central America, including profiles of Guatemala, Belize, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Features comprehensive list of U.S. corporations in Central America. The Resource Center, Box 4726, Albuquerque, NM 87196, tel. (505) 266-5009, $7.00 each or $4.20 for 5 or more.

Cry of the People, Penny Lernoux, 1980, 459 pp., paperback. Excellent account of the strugle for human rights in Latin America and the changing role of the Catholic Church. Penguin Books, $6.95.

Publications:

Latin America Update, bimonthly news analysis published by the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), a human rights advocacy office. WOLA, 110 Maryland Avenue, NE, Washington, DC 20002. $10 annual subscription.

Legislative Update, one-page bulletin every 2½ - 3 weeks with latest information on Central America debate in Congress, action suggestions. Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy, 120 Maryland Avenue, NE Washington, DC 20002. $20 annual subscription.

Update Central America, monthly mailing of information, resources and action suggestions from the Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 633, New York, N.Y. 10115. $15/year

Central America Report, bimonthly newsletter of the Religious Task Force on Central America, 1747 Connecticut Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20009. $5/yr. Also available from the RTF are bimonthly information packets with information on the church, testimonies, and organizing aids for justice groups and religious organizations. $20/year.

Report on the Americas, bimonthly publication from the North American Congress on Latin America. In-depth studies often focusing on Central America and/or individual countries. Available from NACLA, 151 19th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011, $3.00 each plus 50¢ postage.

Central America Update, bimonthly newsletter published jointly by the Latin American Working Group and the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith & Justice, both of Toronto, Canada. Includes ongoing analysis of Central America, as well as information concerning solidarity in Canada and Canadian government policy toward Central America. Central America Update, Box 2207 Station P, Toronto, Ontario, M5S 2T2, Canada. $10/year.

Central America/Human Rights Legislative Hotline, 3-minute recording, updated 1-2 times each week with latest Congressional information. Available February 1, 1983. Contact the Coalition for a New Foreign & Military Policy, 120 Maryland Avenue NE, Washington, DC 20002, for details.

Audio-Visuals:

Central America: Roots of the Crisis, 28 minute color slide show with cassette tape produced by the American Friends Service Committee. Outlines the history, politics, and economics of the current situation, focusing on El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Past and present U.S. policy. Produced 1981, updated September 1982. AFSC Latin America Program, 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Purchase $50. Rental $15 one week.

Dollars and Dictators, 30 minute color slide show with cassette tape in English and Spanish, 1982. Examines U.S. role in Central America, including descriptions of corporate, government, and financial involvement. The Resource Center, P.O. Box 4726, Albuquerque, NM 87196. Purchase $65 individuals and community groups, $125 institutions. Rental $25/week.

Americas in Transition, 29 minutes, color 16 or 35mm film, 1981. Traces U.S. involvement in Latin America this century. Concentrates on the roots of dictatorship, attempts at democracy, and the U.S. role, with emphasis on Nicaragua, Guatemala, Cuba, Chile, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. Narration by Ed Asner. Available from AIT, 401 Broadway, New York, NY 10012, (212) 226-2465. $50 rental per day.

El Salvador

Books and Articles:

"El Salvador: The Hungriest People in Latin America," 4 pp, 1981. Human effects of the conflict in El Salvador and its historic roots. Emphasis on land and hunger issues. Institute for Food and Development Policy, 2588 Miss[illegible] Street, San Francisco, CA 94110. 5/$1.00

El Salvador: The Face of Revolution, Robert Armstrong and Janet Shenk, 1982, 260 pp. Well-documented account of the people's struggle includes personal accounts of the authors. Order from CISPES, P.O. Box 12056, Washington, D.C. 20005. $7.50 plus postage.

The Word Remains: A Life of Oscar Romero, James Brockman, S.J., 1982. Richly documented biography of San Salvador's martyred archbishop and the prophetic role he played. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545. $12.95.

Peacemaking, 1982, 48 pp. A compilation of U.S. religious statements on El Salvador and Salvadoran refugees. Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 633, New York, N.Y. 10115. $2.50 each.

Publications:

El Salvador Bulletin, monthly in-depth update and analysis of El Salvador and the region, well-documented. U.S.-El Salvador Research and Information Center, Box 4797, Berkeley, CA 94704. $10/year.

U.S. Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES), sends periodic mailings with update information and action suggestions. P.O. Box 12056, Washington, DC 20005. (202) 887-5019.

Audio-Visuals:

El Salvador: Another Viet Nam, 1981, 53 minute color 16mm film. Deals comprehensively with the role of U.S. military aid and intervention in El Salvador, as well as the history of events which led up to the present crisis. Available from CISPES regional offices (Contact address and phone above.)

Roses in December, 1982 55 minute color 16mm film. Moving examination of the situation in El Salvador and the work of U.S. lay missioner Jean Donovan, slain there in 1980. First Run Features, 144 Bleecker Street, New York, NY 10012, (212) 673-6881. Rental $100.

Seeds of Liberty, 1981, 30 minute color 16mm film. Documentary examining martyrdom of four American missioners and the role of the church in the Central America crisis. Produced by Maryknoll Communications. Available from the IRTF, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 633, New York, NY 10115, $20 handling fee.

In Pursuit of Refuge, 1982, 30 minute color slide show with cassette. Tells in their own words and music the story of people who have been forced to flee Guatemala and El Salvador. The Resource Center, P.O. Box 4726, Albuquerque, NM 87196. Purchase $65 individuals and community groups, $125 institutions. Rental $25/week. Spanish and English.

Guatemala

Books and Articles:

Guatemala: A People in Search of Dignity, 1981, 43 pp. Includes brief overview of conditions in Guatemala, the role of the church, trade union activity, and U.S. policy. Produced by and available from the New York CIRCUS, P.O. Box 37, New York, NY 10108. $2.00

Guatemala: Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win, 1982, 73 pp. A collection of three articles on the Guatemalan revolutionary process, including the most up-to-date history and analysis of the liberation movement available in English. Concerned Guatemalan Scholars Network. Available from National Network in Solidarity with Guatemala (NISGUA), 930 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20004. $3.00.

Witnesses to Political Violence in Guatemala: the Surpression of a Rural Development Movement, Shelton Davis and Julie Hodson, 1982. An analysis based on the experience of American development workers in Guatemala of the impact of political violence on Guatemalan peasants. Oxfam-America, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116. $5.00. Also available from NISGUA.

IPS Background Information on Guatemala: The Armed Forces and U.S. Military Assistance, June, 1981, 23 pp. Excellent background information on U.S. policy toward Guatemala. Updated version also available, July, 1982. Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q Street, NW Washington, DC 20009. 50¢ each.

Amnesty International, information packets on human rights violations in Guatemala available from AI, 308 W. 58th Street, New York, NY 10019.

Publications:

National Network in Solidarity with Guatemala (NISGUA), provides monthly information and action updates. 930 F Street, NW Washington, DC 20004, $15/year.

Audio-Visuals:

Guatemala: The Gathering Storm, 1982, 25 minute color slide show with cassette tape. Documents current reality of Guatemala and its historical antecedents. Excellent introduction for general audience. GCR Media Arts, 24 Curtis Avenue, Somerville, MA 02144. Contact for price information.

Guatemala: Testimonies, 1982, 25 minute color videotape. Testimonies from survivors of massacres in rural indigenous communities since the Rios Montt coup (March 1982). Produced by Skylight Pictures. Purchase from Skylight, 330 W. 42nd Street, 24th floor, New York, NY 10036, $75. Rental from NISGUA, $15. Available in 1/2" or 3/4".

Nicaragua

Books and Articles:

Sandino's Daughters, Margaret Randall, 1981, 220 pp., paperback. The story of the formation and work of women's organizations, biographies of church and political leaders, the roles of women in the new Nicaragua. The Crossing Press, Trumansberg, NY 14886. $7.95 plus postage.

Triumph of the People, George Black, 1981, 360 pp. paperback. Development of mass movement Sandinista Front, U.S. intervention, victory of July, 1979, first year of revolution, current struggles including destablization. Available from National Network in Solidarity with the Nicaraguan People (NNSNP), 930 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20004. $7.95 plus $1.50 postage.

Fact Sheets, 1982. Single sheets published by the NNSNP, covering such topics as: Religion, Economy, Government and Politics, Atlanta Coast, U.S. Covert Action, Women, and Agrarian Reform. Available from the NNSNP. One packet of seven costs $2.00. Bulk orders: 7¢ each (25 or more).

The Gospel of Solentiname, Ernesto Cardenal, 4 vols. Biblical reflections from the peasant community of Solentiname during the time of the Somoza dictatorship. Edited by poet, priest, and Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545.

Publications:

Nicaragua Update, published bimonthly by the Nicaragua Interfaith Committee for Action, affiliated with the Northern California Ecumenical Council. Articles on Nicaragua, Central America, with particular emphasis on church and religious issues. NICA, 942 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94102, $7/year.

Nicaragua, new bimonthly publication of the NNSNP. Updated information on latest developments. Covers intervention and defense as well as economic and social reconstruction. $5/year (address above).

Bulletin, monthly publication of the Central American Historical Institute. Chronicles events in Nicaragua and provides in-depth information on several topics each month. CAHI, Intercultural Center, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057. $25.00 per year.

Audio-Visuals:

Thank God and the Revolution, 50 minute, 16mm color film. Compares Christian ideals and practices with those of the revolution. The interviewees--ranging from an American nun living in Nicaragua to leading government figures--stress the similarity between revolutionary and Christian values. Available from NNSNP. Rental $75 plus postage.

From the Ashes: Nicaragua Today, 60 min. 16mm color film. Examines the revolution from the point of view of one family. Intertwines literacy crusade, discussion of women's role, etc., with rare historical footage of U.S.-Nicaraguan relations and military camps where U.S.-backed overthrow of Sandinista government is being planned. Rental $50 from Chicago Committee in Support of the Nicaraguan People, 3411 W. Diversey, Chicago, IL 60647, or from Central America Solidarity Association, 1151 Massachusett Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Now We're Awakened! Women in Nicaragua, 30 minute 80 color slides. Depicts women's participation in the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship and the rebuilding of Nicaraguan society. Rental $15 plus postage from NNSNP. Purchase $75 from PAN, 410 Merritt #7, Oakland, CA 94610.

Honduras

Books and Articles:

Militarizing Central America: The U.S. in Guatemala & Honduras, 1982, 4 pp. Overview of U.S. policy toward the region with emphasis on escalating military aid, training, and advisors. National Action/Research on the Military-Industrial Complex (NARMIC), 1501 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102. $.50 each. $12/100.

Honduras Borders on Tragedy, Eva Gold, 1982, 4 pp. Examines effect of U.S. regional policy on internal situation in Honduras. Reprint from WIN Magazine, available from NARMIC, $.50 each, $12/100.

Inside Honduras, Philip Wheaton, 1982, 60 pp. Well-documented investigation of U.S. militization of Honduras, focusing on 1980-1982 period. Key to understanding U.S. policy toward Central America. EPICA, 1470 Irving Street, NW Washington, DC 20010. $3.50 plus 50¢ postage.

Publications:

Honduras Information Center provides monthly mailings with update information, background documents, and analysis of internal Honduran developments. 1151 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138. (617) 497-0150. Free.

Audio-Visuals:

Honduras: Human Rights, 1982, slide show produced by the Honduran Committee in Defense of Human Rights. Overview of human rights violations in 1982. Available from the Honduras Information Center, price negotiable.

Seeds of Revolution, 1980, 16mm color film. Produced by ABC, focuses on the militarization of peasant cooperatives, internal situation in Honduras in general. Available from the Honduras Information Center, price negotiable.

Other Resources

Drama:

Guilty of the Gospel, drama for production by local groups focussed on the four U.S. missionary women slain in El Salvador. Based on scripture reflections. Script, people's page and action suggestions. Quixote Center, P.O. Box 651, Hyattsvile, MD 20782. $2.00.

Jesus: The Life of a Peasant in El Salvador, a play by the mime duo Gould & Stearns with music and narration. By telling the story of one peasant, examines the impact of U.S. policy on the people of El Salvador and Central America. For information on planning a tour, contact Gould & Stearns, 83 Main Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

Calendars:

We Shall Rise Again, 1983 calendar of the Religious Task Force on Central America. A weekly datebook of contemporary inspiration and struggle from Central America. 1747 Connecticut Avenue, NW Washington, DC 20005, $4.50 each.

En Lucha!, 1983 Guardian Newspaper calendar. Beautiful artwork depicting the struggles of the peoples of Central America and the Caribbean for their liberation. 33 West 17th Street, New York, NY 10011. $5.95 each plus $1 postage.

REFUGEES FROM CENTRAL AMERICA

Audio-Visuals:

Exodus from Terror: Plight of the Salvadoran People. 20-minute slide show with cassette and script, 1981. Socio-economic and political roots of the crisis in El Salvador. The impact of the Church's option for the poor, and the role of Archbishop Romero and the four American churchwomen murdered in 1980. Plight of the refugees. Good for church groups for overall introduction. The Catholic Connection, 27 Isavella St., Boston, MA 02117. Rental $10/day. Purchase $40.

Grave of an Unknown Salvadoran Refugee. Color filmstrip with cassette, 28 minutes, 1981. Portrays the flight of the Salvadoran refugees in Honduras, and the response of the church and the United Nations. Produced by the United Methodist Church. Purchase $10 from the Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America, 475 Riverside Drive, Room 633, New York, NY 10115.

Nowhere to Run. 25 minute videotape. Documentary of Salvadoran refugees in Honduras. Downtown Community TV Center, 87 Lafayette Street, New York, NY (212) 966-4510. Rental $40/day. Purchase $125.

In Pursuit of Refuge, 1982, 30-minute color slide show with cassette. Tells in their own words and music the story of people who have been forced to flee the war-torn countries of Guatemala and El Salvador. The Resource Center, P.O. Box 4726, Albuquerque, NM 87196. Purchase $65 individuals and community groups, $125 institutions. Rental $25/week. Spanish and English.

Booklets:

Sanctuary: A Justice Ministry. Booket on how to provide sanctuary to Central American refugees using churches in the USA. Published by Chicago Religious Task Force on Central America. 407 S. Dearborn Street, Room 370, Chicago IL 60605 312/663-4398. Price: $3.00/copy or $1.50 each (orders of 10 or more copies) Organizer's handbook available -- "Nuts and Bolts" -- $3.00 each.

No Promised Land: American Refugee Policies and the Rule of Law, Gary MacEoin and Nivita Riley, 1982, 105 pp. Drawing on the experiences of the Haitian, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan refugees seeking asylum in this country, the authors explore the contradictions of U.S. refugee policy. Oxfam-America, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116. $2.50 each plus 50¢ postage.

Above Resource List Compiled by:

The Inter-Religious Task Force on El Salvador and Central America
475 Riverside Drive, Room 633
New York, NY 10115
212/870-3383

This booklet jointly produced by and available from:

American Friends Service Committee
Human Rights Program
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Church World Service
Immigration and Refugee Program
475 Riverside Drive, Room 666
New York, NY 10115

Inter-Religious Task Force on
El Salvador and Central America
475 Riverside Drive, Room 633
New York, NY 10115

Lutheran Immigration
and Refugee Services
360 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010